

*Remains of Christian Antiquity.*  
A C C O U N T  
OF THE  
M A R T Y R S

A T  
*Churches*  
S M Y R N A, <sup>K</sup> and L Y O N S,  
In the SECOND CENTURY.

W I T H  
EXPLANATORY NOTES.

*Ea sunt vetustissima Ecclesie martyria, quorum  
lectione piorum animus ita afficitur, ut nun-  
quam satur inde recedat. Quod quidem ita  
esse, unusquisque pro suo et conscientiae moda  
sentire potest. Certè ego nihil unquam in Hi-  
storia Ecclesiastica vidi, a cuius lectione commo-  
tior recedam, ut non amplius meus esse videar.*

JOS. SCALIGER.

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T O

THE RIGHT REVEREND

RICHARD HURD, D. D.

BISHOP OF LICHFIELD AND COVENTRY,

THESE REMAINS  
OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITY

ARE GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE Epistle from the church at Smyrna, and that from the Christians of Lyons and Vienne, are generally ranked by the learned among the most precious monuments of Ecclesiastical Antiquity.

Eusebius, b. 4. c. 15. has preserved great part of the epistle from the church at Smyrna; but the entire epistle was first published by Archbishop Usher.

The epistle from the Christians of Lyons and Vienne was transcribed by Eusebius into a work, called The collection of martyrs, which is now lost. It appears, however, that he has inserted the most material circumstances  
of

## ADVERTISEMENT.

of that epistle in his Ecclesiastical History, b. 5. c. 1. — 3.

There are various English translations of the two epistles; but in a style incorrect and diffuse. It was therefore thought, that an attempt to preserve, even in a version, somewhat of the gravity of the originals, might be favourably received by the public.

The notes will afford little new or interesting to men of erudition; yet they may prove of some benefit to the unlearned reader.

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## ERRATUM.

Pag. 58. lin. 12. for exaltation read exultation.

OF THE  
MARTYRS  
AT  
SMYRNA.

**T**HE church of God in Smyrna,  
to the church of God in Phi-  
ladelphia, and to all the con-  
gregations of the holy and universal  
church in every place, may mercy, peace,  
and the love of God the Father, and of  
our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied.

Brethren, we write unto you of  
those who bare testimony to the faith,  
and of the blessed Polycarp, who appea-

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fed



sed the persecution, sealing it up, as it were, by his testimony.

Now the circumstances previous to this were, in general, so disposed, that the Lord from on high might manifest unto us a martyrdom undergone according to the gospel; for Polycarp waited until he should be delivered up, even as our Lord did, that we might become imitators of him, aiming at what profiteth our neighbours as well as ourselves. This indeed is true and steadfast brotherly kindness, if we seek that all the brethren together with us may be saved.

Blessed therefore and honourable are all martyrdoms endured according to the will of God: for it becometh us, who profess to be devout above all others, to ascribe whatever befalleth to the will of God.

And

And indeed, who can forbear admiring their magnanimity and patience, and their love towards their master, who when the flesh was torn off their veins and arteries through scourging, so that the inward structure of their bodies was disclosed, yet nevertheless persevered: and while the bystanders pitied and bewailed them, yet they themselves suffered, without uttering a groan: hereby manifesting unto us all, that in that hour of torture, those witnesses of Christ were absent from the body, or rather, that our Lord stood beside them, and had fellowship with them; and they, fixing their thoughts stedfastly on the grace of Christ, despised the torments of this world, and through endurance for one hour, redeemed themselves from everlasting punishment. Unto them the fire, admini-

stered by their cruel tormentors, was as if it had been cold; for they sought to escape from *that* fire which is everlasting and never to be extinguished, and they looked up with the eyes of their hearts to the good things reserved for those who endure unto the end, “which  
 “neither hath ear heard, nor eye seen,  
 “neither hath it entered into the heart  
 “of man to conceive.” But to them were those good things revealed from the Lord; for they were no longer as mortal men, but had already become as angels. In like manner, after they were condemned to be exposed to wild beasts, they endured grievous chastisements, being laid down on sharp shells, and buffeted with many and various tortures, that, if it had been possible, the tyrant might have perverted them, through continuance



tinuance of suffering, to a denial of the faith. For the devil devised many things against them ; but, thanks be unto God, he prevailed not over them all.

Indeed the fortitude of Germanicus strengthened their feeble-mindedness by the constancy which was in him : he also combating with wild beasts, eminently distinguished himself ; for when the proconsul endeavoured to win him over, and bespoke him to have pity on his youth, Germanicus invited, and even irritated the wild beast, that he himself might be the more speedily removed from an unjust and licentious world.

And all the people wondered at the fortitude of the whole race of Christians, devout men, and beloved of the Lord ; and they began to cry, “ Away with the “ ungodly, seek out Polycarp.”

Now,

Now, a certain man, named *Quintus*, a Phrygian by birth, and newly come out of Phrygia, when he beheld the wild beasts, was dismayed. This man had prevailed on himself to appear of his own accord before the proconsul, and had excited others to follow his example; but the proconsul, by soothing speeches, persuaded him to swear, and to offer incense. Wherefore, brethren, we commend not those who voluntarily repair to the judgment-seat; for the gospel hath not so taught.

The admirable Polycarp, when he heard of these things, was not disturbed. At first he resolved within himself to abide in the city: nevertheless most of his friends persuaded him to depart, and he removed to a country-place not far distant; and *there*, with a few friends, he

he remained instant in offering supplication day and night for all men, and for all the churches throughout the world, as was his wont: and while he prayed, three days before he was apprehended, he beheld, in a vision, his pillow consumed by flames; and turning to those who were with him, he said in the spirit of prophecy, "It behoves me to be burnt alive."

While they who sought after him continued to make diligent search, he removed to another village: and forthwith they arrived *there*; and not having found Polycarp, they laid hands on two lads, and one of them, having been constrained by torture, confessed where he was. Indeed he could not be concealed; for they who betrayed him were of his own household.

And



And the Irenarch, named *Herod*, sought to bring Polycarp into the place allotted for public shews, whereby he might enter into his inheritance, being made a partaker with Christ; while they who gave him up might share in the condemnation of Judas.

Having therefore the lad to conduct them, the peace-officers, and horsemen with their wonted weapons, as if they had been pursuing a robber, issued forth on the afternoon of the sixth day of the week, and entering in at even-tide, they found Polycarp lying in an upper chamber. He might have retired into another house; howbeit he would not be persuaded, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." When he heard that they who sought after him were arrived, he came down, and conversed with them;

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and

and they admired the comeliness and gravity of his old age; and certain of them said, " Was such mighty eagerness of inquiry only to apprehend this aged man ?" But he without delay ordered a table to be spread for them, and invited them to eat and drink at their pleasure, requesting them only to allow him one hour wherein he might pray without interruption; and his request having been granted, he arose, and being filled with grace from the Lord, he prayed, insomuch that for the space of two hours he could not cease: and all who heard him were astonished, and many of his enemies testified their regret at having come out against an old man of so divine an appearance. In his prayers he remembered all with whom at any time he had been conversant, whether small

or great, honourable or mean : he also prayed for the universal church throughout the world.

When he had ceased from praying, and the hour of departure came, they placed him on an ass, and conducted him into the city, it being the day of the great Sabbath. And Herod the Irrenarch, and his father Nicetas, met him ; and they took him into their chariot, and seating themselves beside him, they sought to persuade him, saying, among other things, “ What evil is there to pronounce the words *Lord Cesar*, and “ to sacrifice, whereby thy life may be “ saved ? ” At first, Polycarp answered not ; but they continuing to urge him, he said, “ What ye counsel me to do, I “ will never do.” And when they could not persuade him, they reviled him, and thrust



thruff him out of the chariot with so much violence, that in coming down his leg was wounded. Nevertheless, as if he had received no harm, he passed on steadily and courageously, and with speed, and was led into the theatre; and then there arose a tumultuous noise, so that no man might be heard.

But as he entered in, there came a voice from heaven, saying, "Be of good courage, Polycarp, and quit thyself like a man." And our people who were present, heard the voice; howbeit no one perceived from whom it proceeded. When the multitude heard that Polycarp was taken, and saw him dragged before the judgement-seat of the proconsul, they shouted aloud: and the proconsul inquired of him, whether he was Polycarp; and he having acknow-

ledged that he was, the proconsul began  
 to exhort him to deny Christ, saying,  
 "Reverence thine old age;" and ut-  
 tering other expressions of the like na-  
 ture, such as the Heathens are wont to  
 use. "Swear by *the fortune of Caesar*;  
 "repent, and say, *Away with the un-*  
 "*godly.*" Then Polycarp, with a stern  
 countenance, surveyed the assembled  
 multitude; and waving his hand to-  
 wards them, he groaned, and lifted up  
 his eyes towards heaven, and said, "A-  
 "way with the ungodly." And when  
 the proconsul still urged him, saying,  
 "Swear, and I will set thee free; revile  
 "Christ." Polycarp thus spake: "These  
 "fourscore and six years serve I him,  
 "and he has never wronged me; how  
 "then can I blaspheme my King and  
 "my Saviour?" But when the pro-  
 consul

consul persisted in requiring him to swear  
 by *the fortune of Caesar*, Polycarp said,  
 " Since thou ostentatiously requirest me  
 " to swear by what thou stylest *the for-*  
 " *tune of Caesar*, as if thou wert igno-  
 " rant of what I am, hear me boldly  
 " speak. I am a Christian; and if thou  
 " wouldst learn what is the doctrine of  
 " Christianity, appoint a day, and hear."  
 The proconsul said, " Go and convince  
 " the multitude." Polycarp replied, " I  
 " hold it fit to answer for myself before  
 " thee; for we are taught to render un-  
 " to magistracy, and unto the powers  
 " which are ordained of God, all due  
 " reverence, so far as we may without  
 " wounding our conscience: but as for  
 " *that* multitude, I hold them unworthy  
 " that I should pronounce the apology  
 " of my faith unto them." The pro-  
 consul



consul said, " I have wild beasts ; to  
 " them will I deliver thee, unless thou  
 " changest." Polycarp said, " Call them  
 " forth ; for that I should change from  
 " the better to what is worse, is impossi-  
 " ble ; but to change from evil to good,  
 " *that* is excellent." The proconsul re-  
 plied, " Since thou despisest the wild  
 " beasts, I will cause thee to be subdued  
 " by fire, unless thou changest." Po-  
 lycarp said, " Thou threatenest me with  
 " a fire which burneth for a season, and  
 " will be speedily extinguished ; but thou  
 " art ignorant of that fire of a future  
 " judgement, and everlasting pains, re-  
 " served for the wicked. But why lin-  
 " gerest thou ? bring forth whatever to  
 " thee seemeth good." While he spake  
 these words, and many more, he was filled  
 with confidence and joy, and grace seem-  
 ed

ed to overspread his countenance; so that he shrunk not, neither was he dismayed at the things uttered against him. But the proconsul was astonished, and he sent the crier to proclaim thrice in the midst of the theatre, "Polycarp confesseth that he is a Christian."

And when the crier had made this proclamation, the multitude of the Heathens, and of the Jews, who dwelt in Smyrna, furiously, and with a loud voice, called out, "This is the teacher of Asia; this is the father of the Christians, the overthrower of our gods; he who instructeth the people to abstain from sacrificing, and from religious worship." And with much clamour they required Philip, the president of the priests of Asia, to let out a lion against Polycarp: but Philip answered, that he could

could not; because the season for exhibiting wild beasts in the public shews was already past. Then they all, with one voice, cried out, "Let Polycarp be burnt alive." Now it behoved that his vision should be fulfilled: for while he prayed, he beheld his pillow as if in flames; and turning to the believers who were with him, he said, in the spirit of prophecy, "I must needs be burnt alive."

What the multitude had proposed was straightway gone about; and all the people gathered wood and faggots from the workhouses and from the baths: the Jews, above all, as their manner is, were zealous in the business.

And when the pile was prepared, Polycarp laid aside his garments; and having unloosed his girdle, he sought to  
untie



untie his sandals. This he had not usually done aforetime ; for all the believers were wont to strive who should be the first to do these offices for him, so much was he honoured by reason of his virtuous demeanor, even before he had attained to old age.

And forthwith the instruments belonging to execution were placed around him. But when they prepared to fasten him with nails, he said, " Suffer me to remain as I am ; for he who enableth me to endure the fire, will also enable me to abide unmoved in the pile, although you do not fasten me with nails." And they did not nail him to the stake ; howbeit they bound him.

And he, putting his hands behind him, and then being bound, like a goodly ram, chosen out of the great flock as a

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burnt-

burnt-offering acceptable unto God, looked up to heaven, and thus spake: " O  
 " thou, Almighty Lord, the Father of  
 " Jesus the Anointed, thy well-beloved  
 " and blessed Son, through whom we  
 " have received the knowledge of thee,  
 " the God of angels and powers, of all  
 " creation, and of the whole race of the  
 " just who live in thy presence; I adore  
 " thee, that thou hast vouchsafed to  
 " bring me to this day and to this hour,  
 " that I might have a portion in the number of the witnesses in the cup of thine  
 " Anointed, unto the resurrection of life  
 " eternal in soul and body, through the  
 " incorruption of the Holy Ghost; among whom may I be now received  
 " into thy presence as an accepted sacrifice, according to what was appointed  
 " and foretold, and is now fulfilled by  
 " thee

“ thee the God of truth : wherefore,  
 “ and for all things, I praise thee, I bless  
 “ thee, I magnify thee, with Jesus Christ,  
 “ thy beloved Son, the Everlasting, and  
 “ above the heavens ; with whom, to  
 “ thee, and the Holy Spirit, be glory,  
 “ both now and for ever. *Amen.*”

Polycarp having finished his prayer,  
 and pronounced *Amen*, they who had  
 the charge of the fire lighted it up : and  
 while it blazed vehemently, a great mar-  
 vel was seen by us who have been pre-  
 served as witnesses, that we might de-  
 clare to others the things which happen-  
 ed ; for the fire, forming itself into a  
 vaulted chamber, like the sail of a ship  
 filled with the wind, encircled and wall-  
 ed round the body of the martyr ; and  
 he was in the midst thereof, not as flesh  
 burning, but as bread while it is baked,



or as gold or silver heated in a furnace. We also perceived a fragrant smell, as of incense, or of other costly spices. At length, when the ungodly saw that the body could not be consumed by the fire, they called for the executioner to pierce him with a dagger: and the executioner having pierced Polycarp, abundance of blood issued forth, so as to quench the fire. And all the multitude marvelled at the pre-eminence of the elect over the unbelievers.

Of the number of the elect this most admirable martyr undoubtedly was, Bishop of the universal church which is at Smyrna, an apostolic teacher in our times, and one endued with the spirit of prophecy; for every word which he uttered has already been, or will be hereafter fulfilled.

But

But that envious, reviling, and evil one, the adversary of the generation of the just, when he beheld that Polycarp had demeaned himself blamelessly from the beginning, had been crowned with an unfading crown, and, without controversy, had borne away the prize, he strove to prevent our people from receiving his remains, which many of us did vehemently desire, that they might partake of his holy body; and certain men urged Nicetas, the father of Herod, and brother of Alce, to prevail with the proconsul not to bestow the body on us for burial; "lest," said they, "leaving him that was crucified, they begin to worship this man." And this they said at the instigation of the Jews; who also kept watch on us when we were about to convey away the body from the pile.

But

But they knew not, that *we* could never leave Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all that are saved throughout the world, and that we could never worship any one beside him. Him we *adore* as being the Son of God : nevertheless we duly *love* the martyrs, by reason of their being the disciples and imitators of the Lord, and of their transcendent affection to their sovereign and master. With them may we have communion, and may we be fellow-disciples with them !

Now when the centurion perceived the opposition of the Jews, he laid the corpse in the midst of the pile, and burnt it. And thus at length we gathered together those bones, more precious than gems, and more excellent than gold ; and we placed them where it was fitting.

*There*



*There we purpose, whenever God shall grant opportunity, to celebrate with exultation and joy the birth-day of the martyrdom of Polycarp; in remembrance of those who have already combated, and for the discipline and preparation of those who are yet to combat.*

Such were the things which happened as to the blessed Polycarp; who, together with those of Philadelphia, completed the number of the twelve martyrs at Smyrna. Yet he, singly, is had in remembrance above all others; inso-much that he is spoken of even by the Heathens throughout every place. An eminent teacher he was, and moreover a chosen martyr; whose manner of martyrdom all desire to imitate, because it was according to the gospel of Christ: for having by patience foiled the unrighteous governor,

governor, and received the incorruptible garland, he now rejoiceth with the apostles and all the spirits of the just, and he glorifieth God, even the Father, and blesteth our Lord, the ruler of our bodies, and the shepherd of the universal church throughout the whole earth.

Your desire was, that the things which came to pass should be declared unto you at large: for the present we have delivered the chief circumstances thereof, by the hands of Mark, our brother. Having read this epistle, send it on to the brethren who are at a greater distance, that they also may glorify the Lord, who maketh choice among his own servants, and who is able to lead us all, by his grace and free gift, into his everlasting kingdom, through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; to whom be  
 I glory,

glory, honour, might, and majesty, for ever and ever. Amen. Salute all the saints. They who are with us, salute you; as doth Euarestus also, the writer hereof, with his whole house.

[Now the martyrdom of the blessed Polycarp happened on the second day of the month Xanthicus, before the expiration of the seventh of the kalends of March, at the season of the Great Sabbath, at the eighth hour. He was apprehended by Herod, Philip the Trallian being chief of the priests of Asia, and Statius Quadratus proconsul. Our Lord Jesus Christ reigning for evermore; to whom be glory, majesty, and an eternal throne, from generation to generation. Amen.]

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Brethren,



Brethren, we greet you well. Let your walk be according to the gospel, in the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ; with whom, glory be to the Father, and the Holy Spirit, to the salvation of the elect saints. So the blessed Polycarp bare witness. May we be found following his footsteps in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

OF

OF THE  
MARTYRS  
AT  
LYONS, in GAUL.

**T**HE servants of Christ, inhabiting  
Vienne and Lyons of Gaul, to  
the brethren throughout Asia and Phry-  
gia, of one common faith and hope of  
redemption with ourselves, peace, grace,  
and glory, from God the Father, and  
from Jesus Christ our Lord.

The greatness of the tribulation in  
these parts, the exceeding rage of the  
Heathen against the saints, and the suf-  
ferings

ferings of the blessed martyrs, are what  
 we are not able fully to relate unto you ;  
 neither indeed can they be contained in  
 writing : for the adversary, with all vio-  
 lence, rushed upon us, preluding alrea-  
 dy to that his coming, which is to be  
 hereafter with unrestrained fury. He  
 went about every where, exercising his  
 servants to skirmish before the combat  
 with the servants of the Lord, insomuch  
 that we were not only excluded from  
 houses, public baths, markets, and courts  
 of justice, but we were even prohibited  
 from appearing in any place : neverthe-  
 less, the grace of God was unto us as a  
 commander against the adversary ; it res-  
 cued those who were weak, and it or-  
 dained chosen persons, as firm pillars, a-  
 ble, through patience, to support the  
 whole force of the assaults of the wicked  
 one.



one. Engaging with him in close combat, they endured reproach, and evil entreatment of every kind; and, making small account of what others hold to be grievous, they hastened unto Christ: and thus they manifested, that of a truth the sufferings of this present life "are not to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us."

And first of all, they courageously endured whatever contumelies the multitude heaped on them: for they were insulted, beaten, and dragged about, spoiled, stoned, and held in durance; and they suffered whatever else the brutal multitude delights to inflict on enemies in a state of warfare: and having been brought before the tribune of the soldiers, and the magistrates of the city, they were examined in presence of the whole

whole people, and having given their testimony to the faith, they were shut up in prison until the arrival of the governor.

: When afterwards they were brought before the governor, his demeanor to our people was exceedingly savage. Then did Vettius Epagathus, one of the brethren, fulfil the measure of love towards God and towards his neighbour. The manners of this person were so strict, that, young as he was, men held him to be altogether a partaker in the testimony given to the ancient Zacharias; for "he  
 " had walked in the commandments and  
 " ordinances of the Lord blameless:" moreover, he was nothing slothful in ministering unto his neighbour, very zealous for the Lord, and fervent in spirit. This excellent person could not  
 brook

brook the injustice done unto us, and being moved with indignation, he requested permission to plead the cause of the Christians; for that among us there was nothing ungodly or impious. But they who stood around the judgement-seat exclaimed against him; for he was noted among them all. And the governor, instead of granting his just request, demanded of him, "Whether he also was a Christian?" and Epagathus, with a most audible voice, declared, "That he *was* a Christian;" and he also was numbered among the martyrs, and he obtained the appellation of the *Advocate of the Christians*. But himself had an advocate within, even the Holy Spirit, in more ample measure than Zacharias; the which he manifested in the abundance of his brotherly kindness, chusing  
to



to lay down his life for the vindication of the brethren : he was, and even now is, a true disciple of Christ, “ following “ the Lamb wheresoever he goeth.”

And afterwards, in like manner, the rest began to be separately questioned. The foremost martyrs were bright and ready prepared, and with all alacrity they filled up the just measure of their confession. Now also there appeared those who were unprepared and unexercised, feeble as yet, and incapable of supporting the great contest : of such there fell off to the number of about ten ; and these wrought much vexation of spirit unto us, and sorrow not to be measured, and they lessened the courage of the rest, who, not having been yet apprehended, though suffering much, had continued to be present with the martyrs, and had

never forsaken them. Indeed we were all greatly dismayed, by reason of the uncertainty of the event in the day of trial: we did not fear the tortures inflicted; but looking forward unto the end, we dreaded lest any one should fall. And there were apprehended from day to day such as were worthy to supply the place of those who had fallen off; so that at length the most excellent persons of both churches, and they by whose means especially our affairs in these parts had been established, were detained in custody together. Certain Heathens also, slaves of our people, were apprehended; for the governor had published a general order, that we should all be sought after; and these slaves, through the instigation of Satan, and dreading what they saw the saints endure, gave testimony against

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gainst us, as guilty of the murder of young children, and of incest, and of other crimes, which it is not lawful for us to think of, much less to perpetrate, and which indeed we cannot suppose to have been ever perpetrated by man. But when the rumour of these things was spread abroad, all men became as wild beasts towards us, insomuch that some who hitherto had shewn themselves moderate, either from relation or from neighbourhood, now became exasperated against us. Then was fulfilled that which our Lord spake, "The time will come, when every one who slayeth you, shall think that he offereth service to God."

Finally, the holy martyrs endured torments which are beyond all description, Satan meanwhile eagerly striving, that  
by



by them also something flagitious might be acknowledged: but, above all, the whole fury of the multitude, of the governor, and of the soldiers, was aimed at Sanctus, a deacon of the church of Vienne, Maturus, one newly enlightened, yet a steady combatant, and Attalus, a native of Pergamus, who had ever been as a foundation-stone, and as a pillar unto the church in these parts; also against Blandina, in whom Christ shewed, that the things which appear unto men to be base and without comeliness, and altogether contemptible, are highly honoured in the sight of the Lord, when ever there is in them that love which displays itself, not in ostentatious professions, but in power and in deed. Now all of us feared, that when Blandina was brought unto the combat, she

would have been unable, through infirmity of body, to make a resolute confession of the faith; the like fear had her mistress according to the flesh, herself a combatant together with the martyrs. Blandina nevertheless was filled with such mighty power, that the tormentors, who, from the dawn of day until evening, alternately relieving one another, had employed every manner of torture against her, now became exhausted and feeble, through much toil; and they themselves confessed, that *she* had overcome; for that there remained no farther tortures which they could apply: and they were astonished, that her breath continued in her after her body had been so torn and laid open; and they declared, that any one of the various kinds of torture employed against her was sufficient to have bereaved

bereaved her of life. This blessed woman, as a hardy combatant, seemed to have her youth and vigour renewed, while she bare testimony to the faith, and she was restored to ease, and became insensible of her sufferings, when she pronounced these words : “ I am a Christian, and there is no evil done among us.”

Sanctus also courageously endured the most excessive tortures that could be devised by man. The unrighteous hoped, through the continuance and magnitude of the tortures, to hear from him some confession of things unseemly ; but he resisted them with so great constancy, that he would not so much as disclose unto them either his name or his nation : nor would he say of what city he was, nor whether he was a freeman or a slave ;  
but



but to every question that was asked of him, he made answer in the Roman language, "I am a Christian." *That* he repeatedly avowed to be to him instead of name, and city, and family, and all things. Other language than this the Heathens heard not from him. Wherefore, in torturing him, a mighty emulation arose between the governor and the tormentors, insomuch that when they had nothing more which they could do against him, they at length fixed heated plates of brass to the most sensible parts of his body: and these indeed were burnt; but he himself inflexibly persevered, firm in his confession, being bedewed and comforted by that heavenly fountain of the water of life which floweth from Christ. His body gave testimony of what had befallen; for it was wholly

wholly wounds and weals, distorted, and having put off the appearance of human shape. Christ also suffering in him, wrought great marvels, destroyed the adversary, and manifested, for an example to others, that nothing can be formidable where the love of the Father is, and nothing painful where the glory of Christ. For the ungodly, after certain days had passed, again began to torment the martyr: they imagined, that while his wounds were swelled and inflamed, and incapable of enduring the slightest touch, he would either be overcome through the repetition of tortures, or, expiring amid them, would cause fear to fall on the rest of the brethren. Nevertheless nothing of this sort ensued; but on the contrary, beyond all expectation and belief of man, his body unbent itself

Itself while the tortures were repeated, and it became erect, and resumed its form, and the exercise of its members; so that, through the grace of Christ, this last torture, instead of afflicting, healed.

And there was a certain woman, named Biblias, of the number of those who had denied Christ. Satan, confident that she was already devoured of him, sought to increase her condemnation, by causing her to blaspheme; and he brought her forth to punishment; and he hoped to constrain her, already feeble and dispirited, to make report, that things ungodly were perpetrated among us. But she, in the midst of torments, awakening as out of a profound sleep, recalled to her remembrance the everlasting punishments in hell, and she

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said the blasphemers, and thus spake:  
 “How can *they* devour children, to  
 “whom it is not lawful even to taste the  
 “blood of brute animals.” And thence-  
 forward she professed, that she was a  
 Christian; and she had her portion a-  
 mong the martyrs.

Now when Christ, through the pa-  
 tience of the blessed martyrs, had made  
 those tyrannical chastisements to wax  
 feeble, Satan bethought himself of other  
 devices; confinement in darkness, and  
 a most noisome prison, the grievous  
 straining of their legs in the stocks, and  
 whatever else the tormentors, when wroth,  
 and filled with the evil spirit, are wont  
 to inflict on their prisoners. Many were  
 hereby suffocated in prison, whom the  
 Lord, to be glorified in all things, will-  
 ed to depart in that sort; while others,

F

although

although they had tasted the bitterness of torment, and were past human cure, remained alive : destitute of assistance from man, but comforted by the Lord, they were strengthened in body and in spirit ; and they administered encouragement and consolation to their brethren. Others again, who were newly confined, not being inured to sufferings, and unable to support the load, expired in prison.

The most blessed Pothinus, to whom the charge of the bishoprick of Lyons had been committed, was more than ninety years old, exceedingly infirm, and who, by reason of bodily weakness, could hardly be said to breathe. Nevertheless he became animated, and he was strengthened in spirit, through his earnest desire after that martyrdom, which

now

now approached: he also was dragged into judgement, having his body dissolved, as it were, through age and maladies; yet still retaining life for the exaltation and triumph of Christ. He was carried before the judgement-seat by the soldiers, the magistrates of the city following him, and the whole multitude of the people making all manner of exclamations against him, as if he had been Christ himself; and *there* did he utter a good confession: for when the governor demanded of him, "*Who* was the God of the Christians?" he answered, "If thou art worthy, thou shalt know." And after this he was unmercifully dragged about; and he endured many blows: for they who were near, did evil entreat him with their hands and their feet, not reverencing his grey hairs,



while they who were at a distance threw at him whatever they could first lay hold of; imagining all of them, that had they omitted ought of their contumelious usage, they would have incurred the guilt of impiety: and thus they esteemed themselves to be the avengers of their gods. And Pothinus, almost expiring, was again thrown into prison; and after two days he gave up the ghost.

And now there ensued a mighty dispensation of God, and an example of the boundless mercy of Christ was exhibited; not such indeed as had often occurred to the brethren, yet one that was not unsuitable to the method and art, as it were, of his government.

When the brethren were first apprehended, they who had become apostates endured imprisonment with the rest, and partook

partook of their sufferings; neither, in that season, did their denial of Christ avail them ought. They who confessed themselves to be Christians were shut up for that cause alone, and no other charge was brought against them: but the others were held in durance as murderers, and defiled; and they received twofold chastisement. *Those* had their sorrows lightened, through the consolation of martyrdom, and the hope of the promises, and the love of Christ, and the influence of the Spirit of the Father: but *these* were grievously tormented by the sentence of their own consciences, insomuch that, when they were all brought to judgement, the difference was to be discerned in their countenances; for the Christians went on rejoicing, with looks intermingled of glory and abundant grace,

grace, and their bonds seemed to be as costly ornaments bestowed on them, as “on a bride adorned with tresses of gold, wrought with divers colours;” and they had the sweet perfume which is of Christ; insomuch that some imagined them to have been indeed anointed with ointment. But the apostates were dispirited and abject, woful in their appearance, and altogether uncomely; and they were reviled as base and unmanly by the Gentiles themselves; and they bare the accusation of murderers, having lost *that name* which is glorious and of great price, and which maketh alive.

Now when the brethren saw these things, they were strengthened in mind; and they who were afterwards taken into custody, permitted not the counsel of the evil one to enter into their thoughts,  
and



and without hesitation they acknowledged that they were Christians.

[After having added some other things, *says Eusebius*, the writers of the epistle thus proceed.]

The manner of their departure through martyrdom was divers. Having plaited one garland of every sort of flowers, and of various colours, they brought it before the Father: and now it was fitting, that those resolute combatants, who had endured the contest in every form, and had mightily overcome, should receive the great and incorruptible crown.

Maturus, therefore, and Sanctus, and Blandina, and Attalus, were publicly exposed to wild beasts, that common spectacle of Gentile inhumanity; and, to that end, a day for exhibiting the combats with wild beasts was especially appointed.

pointed. In the amphitheatre Maturus and Sanctus again underwent every manner of torture, as if hitherto they had not suffered ought; or rather, having repeatedly overthrown their antagonist, and being now to contend among themselves for the crown, they again passed through their wonted course of tribulation; and they were exposed to be torn of wild beasts, and to undergo whatever else the frantic multitude, clamourously, and after divers manners, ordained: and these things having been finished, they were placed in the iron chair; and their bodies were so scorched, that the noisome smell of the burning spread itself around. Neither even here did the multitude cease; but waxing more and more outrageous, they strove to overcome the perseverance of the martyrs. Nevertheless,

from Sanctus they heard nothing beside that confession which of aforetime he had been wont to utter, [that he was a Christian]; and these two men, Maturus and Sanctus, having continued alive throughout this long and mighty contest, were in the end slain with the sword. Instead of the variety exhibited in the combats of gladiators, they themselves, during the course of that day, were made a spectacle unto the world.

Blandina was fastened to a stake, and hung from it, exposed as a prey to the wild beasts let loose against her; and when she appeared in the fashion of one upon a cross, earnestly praying unto God, she greatly encouraged the other combatants: for in their sister, thus combating before their eyes, they beheld him who was crucified for their

G

fate,



sake, that he might assure all believers in him, that whosoever suffereth for the glory of Christ hath perpetual communion with the living God. And none of the wild beasts having offended her, she was taken down from the stake, and again imprisoned; and she was reserved for another combat, that she might increase the condemnation of the crooked serpent, and by her example might animate the brethren. This person, in herself mean and infirm, and wholly despised, was clothed with the strength of Christ, the mighty and unconquerable champion; and she divers times overcame the adversary, and was crowned with an incorruptible garland.

Attalus also was vehemently sought for by the multitude: an eminent person he was; and he entered the lists as a combatant

batant well prepared through the testimony of a good conscience ; for he had been completely exercised in the Christian discipline, and had ever borne witness to the truth among us. And he was led round the amphitheatre ; and they carried a tablet before him, whereon there was written in the Roman language, “ This is Attalus the Christian.” And the multitude swelled with indignation against him. But the governor, when he learnt that he was a Roman, commanded him, together with the others, to be reconducted to prison. He sent to inquire of the Emperor what should be done unto them ; and he awaited his determination. This interval was not useless and unprofitable to the prisoners ; but, through the patience of those who had endured, the immeasura-

ble compassion of Christ became manifest : for by the living were the dead raised to life, and the martyrs obtained favour for those who were not martyrs ; and the virgin mother had great joy when she received alive again those whom she had cast forth as dead. By means of the martyrs most of the apostates returned, as it were, into their mother's womb, and were formed anew, and revived, and they were taught to confess the truth in Christ ; and being now restored to life, and having their spirits braced, they repaired to the judgement-seat, to be once more questioned by the governor. *That* God, who willeth not the death of a sinner, and who is merciful in calling men to repentance, took away the root of bitterness which was in them.

And



And a command came from the Emperor, " That they who confessed Christ  
 " should be put to death ; but that they  
 " who denied him should be set at liber-  
 " ty." And it was now the season of  
*the general convention* at Lyons, whi-  
 ther the men of different nations are  
 wont, from all quarters, to croud in.  
 On that occasion the governor ordered  
 the blessed martyrs to be brought before  
 the judgement-seat, and he exhibited  
 them as a theatrical shew to the assem-  
 bled multitudes : he questioned them a-  
 new, and he caused all those to be be-  
 headed who were found to have the  
 right of Roman citizens ; but as for the  
 rest, he exposed them to wild beasts, and  
 Christ was mightily glorified in those  
 who had formerly denied, but now, con-  
 trary to the expectation of the Gentiles,  
 acknowledged.

acknowledged *him*: for when these men, about to be dismissed, had the question separately put to them, some confessed their faith in Christ, and were numbered with the martyrs. But they who had no traces of the Christian belief in them, nor knowledge of the wedding-garment, nor understanding of the fear of the Lord, remained without. These were sons of perdition, who, by their conversation, brought an evil report of our way. But the rest were added unto the church.

And there was a certain man, named Alexander, a native of Phrygia, and by profession a physician, who had sojourned in Gaul for many years: he was universally known for his love towards God, and his boldness in proclaiming the word; and he was not without a portion of apostolical

apostolical grace. When they who had  
 formerly apostatized were interrogated  
 by the governor, Alexander stood near  
 the judgement-seat, and, by signs, en-  
 couraged them to make confession of the  
 faith, appearing unto the bystanders like  
 one in travel. But the multitude, grie-  
 vously offended, that they who had for-  
 merly denied, should now confess the  
 faith, exclaimed against Alexander as  
 the author of this change. And the go-  
 vernor ordered him to be brought into  
 judgement, and demanded who he was?  
 and when he said, "A Christian," the  
 governor was wroth, and decreed him  
 to be exposed to the wild beasts. And  
 on the day following Alexander entered  
 into the amphitheatre, together with At-  
 talus; for the governor, willing to do  
 pleasure to the multitude, had again con-  
 demned



demned Attalus to be exposed to wild beasts. In the amphitheatre both underwent whatever torture could be devised ; and having endured this exceeding contest, both were slain with the sword. Alexander all the while uttered not a groan, neither spake he ought ; but in his heart he held converse with God. But Attalus, when he was placed in the iron chair, and the smell of his scorched body was spread around, spake to the multitude in the Roman language: “ This  
 “ which you do is indeed to devour men:  
 “ but as for us, we devour not men;  
 “ neither commit we any other manner  
 “ of wickedness.” And having been asked, “ What was the name of [his]  
 “ God?” he made answer, “ God hath  
 “ not a name, as men have.”

And after all these, on the last day of  
 the

the public shews, Blandina was again brought in, together with Ponticus, a youth about fifteen years old. Day after day they had been conducted into the amphitheatre, that they might be spectators of the tortures inflicted on the brethren; and now they were straitly required to swear by the Gentile idols; and because that they stedfastly persevered, and set the idols at nought, the multitude became as wild beasts towards them, so as neither to pity the tender years of Ponticus, nor to reverence the sex of Blandina. And they exposed Ponticus and Blandina to whatever was horrible in punishment; and they led them round the whole circle of tortures, striving from time to time to constrain them to swear. Nevertheless they strove in vain: for Ponticus, as the Heathens themselves

H

saw,

saw, was animated by the exhortations of his sister; and having courageously endured every torture, gave up the ghost. The blessed Blandina, the last of the whole, was as a noble-spirited matron, who had encouraged her children to the combat, and had sent them before her victorious unto the throne of the King. Having again measured that course which her children had trod, and having combated as they had combated, she hastened unto them with joy and exaltation in her departure, as if she had been bidden to a marriage-banquet, and not exposed a prey to wild beasts. And after she had endured scourging, and had been exposed to wild beasts, and had been scorched in the iron chair, she was at length inclosed in a net, and thrown before a bull: and the bull often times  
tossed



rossed her aloft; howbeit she felt none of these things; for she was full of hope, and by faith laid hold on the promises, and held converse with Christ. In the end she was slaughtered as a victim, and expired.

The Heathens themselves acknowledged, that never did woman among them endure so much as Blandina endured; yet still their madness and their cruelty towards the saints was not satiated: for a savage and barbarous people, once excited by the Devouring Beast, can hardly be appeased. They accordingly sought a new occasion of insulting the bodies of the martyrs; for they felt no shame in being overcome by them, inasmuch as they were devoid of human sense. On the contrary, this inflamed their rage, as if it had been that of a wild beast,

both governor and people equally manifesting their unjust enmity against us, that the scripture might be fulfilled, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still." They threw to the dogs the bodies of those who had been suffocated in prison; and they kept diligent watch, day and night, lest any of us should bestow sepulture on them. They then laid out the mangled and burnt remains of the martyrs, and whatever the wild beasts had not devoured, or the fire had not consumed, together with the heads of those who had been beheaded, and the trunks of their bodies, and they kept them unburied for sundry days, under the charge of a military guard. And some were filled with indignation, and gnashed their teeth against

gainst the remains of the martyrs, as if they had still fought for more abundant revenge. Others derided and insulted them, magnifying their idols, and ascribing the punishment inflicted on the Christians to their power. There were persons of a milder disposition, who seemed in some sort to sympathize with us; yet they also grievously upbraided us, saying, "Where now is their God? and "what hath that religion profited them, "which they preferred above life itself." Such was the diversity of the behaviour of the Gentiles towards us. But we were mightily grieved that we could not bury the bodies: for neither did the darkness of night afford any aid unto us, nor could money or intreaty persuade. The Gentiles watched the bodies with all diligence, as if to deprive them of sepulture



sepulture had been a matter of great gain.

[After having added some other things, *says Eusebius*, they thus proceed.]

After the bodies of the martyrs had been exposed during six days, the ungodly burnt them, and scattered the ashes in the river Rhone, which floweth by the city, that no remains of them might be visible upon earth. And these things they did, as if they had been able to vanquish God, and prevent the martyrs from rising again. “ That, as  
 “ certain among the Gentiles spake,  
 “ they might be deprived of the hope  
 “ of that resurrection, in confidence of  
 “ which they have introduced among us  
 “ a foreign and a new religion, have  
 “ condemned whatever is terrible in tor-  
 “ ture,

" ture, and with readiness and joy have  
 " encountered death. Now let us see,  
 " whether they will arise again, and  
 " whether their God is able to help  
 " them, and to rescue them out of our  
 " hands."

A P.

## A P P E N D I X.

[Eusebius, b. 5. c. 2. 3. has preserved the following detached passages of the epistle from the Christians of Lyons and Vienne to the Asiatic churches: they appear to have made part of a supplement to the general narrative of the sufferings of the martyrs.]

— So zealously did they imitate Christ; “who, being in the form of  
“ God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” [&c.]; that when they were in such high honour, and had given their testimony, not once alone, or twice, but divers times; when, after having been exposed to wild beasts, they had been again imprisoned, and when

2 they



they bare about with them the marks of burnings, and bruises, and wounds, all over their bodies ; yet did they neither proclaim themselves to be martyrs, nor would they permit us to address them by that name ; and as often as any of us did it, either by writing or in discourse, they sharply rebuked us : but most willingly did they appropriate that name unto Christ, the faithful and true witness, the first born from the dead, and the leader to that life which is of God. And they reminded us of the witnesses already departed, saying, “ These even now are “ *witnesses*, whom, in the very act of “ confession, Christ hath vouchsafed to “ take unto himself, setting his seal to “ their testimony in their passage hence ; “ but as for us, we are mean and low- “ ly confessors : ” and with tears they

I

besought

besought the brethren, that earnest prayers might be made for their being perfected. They indeed shewed forth the power of the testimony, demeaning themselves with much boldness towards all the Heathens, and by patience and intrepidity was the nobleness of their minds made known. But being filled with the fear of the Lord, they refused the name of witnesses when bestowed by the brethren.

— They humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God, by which they are now exalted: they justified themselves unto all; but they accused none: they loosed all; but they bound none: and, after the manner of Stephen, that perfect martyr, they prayed for those who grievously tormented them, “ Lord, lay not this sin to their  
“ charge.”

“charge.” Now, if he prayed for those who stoned him, how much more for the brethren?

—Moreover, their most vehement contest with him [the evil one] was by reason of the sincerity of their brotherly kindness, that the beast being strangled, might disgorge those whom he thought to have already devoured. They assumed no glory to themselves from the fall of others; but, with those things wherein they abounded, they liberally ministered unto the needy, having tender compassion toward them, and pouring forth many tears in their behalf before the Father. They asked life, and he gave it; and of it they caused their neighbours to partake. And having been victorious over all, having ever loved peace, and ever exhorted us to



peace, in peace they departed unto God. They left no sorrow to their mother, nor faction and contests among their brethren, but contrariwise, joy, and peace, and unity of mind, and love.

—Alcibiades, one of the number of the martyrs, was wont to lead a life of severity and mortification; and in times past he had fed on bread and water only. This also he attempted to do while in prison; but it was revealed unto Attalus, after he had performed his first combat in the amphitheatre, that herein Alcibiades did not well; because he used not the creatures of God, and left an example of offence unto others. And Alcibiades was persuaded, and he partook of food, making no difference, and rendering thanks. For the grace of God regarded these men; and the Holy Spirit was their counsellor.

NOTES

## NOTES and ILLUSTRATIONS.

Pag. 1.

“ To the church of God in *Philadelphia*.”

This was a circular epistle, sent from the church of Smyrna to the churches of Asia. The copy, which Eusebius used, was addressed to the church of Philomelium.

“ We write unto you.” In the original it is, “ We have written unto you.” To obviate any ambiguity, I have followed the idiom of the English language.

“ Who appeased the persecution, sealing it up; as it were, by his testimony.” The meaning is, “ That as Polycarp was the last person who suffered, the persecution might be said, to have been completed by his death.” Archbishop Wake renders the passage thus : “ Who by his sufferings put an end to the persecution; *setting, as it were, his seal to it.*” In common language,

guage, to set one's seal to a thing, implies, to ratify it, or to acknowledge its validity. This, however, is wide of the sense of the words *ἐπισφραγίσας τῇ μαρτυρίᾳ αὐτῆς*.

Pag. 2.

“ This indeed is true and stedfast brotherly kindness,” &c. Here is a portion of evangelical doctrine, which seems to be applied in a confused and embarrassed manner. We often see the moral precepts of the gospel quoted loosely and unconnectedly by the writers of the early ages of Christianity. Of this there are many examples in Clemens Romanus, and in the epistle of Polycarp. It may not be unworthy of observation, that between the style of the apostolical fathers, and that of the apostles, there is a most discernible difference. For example, let any one compare Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp, with the first epistle of Peter. He who has made the comparison, will



will perceive the conclusion which ought to be drawn from it.

Pag. 3.

“ The bystanders pitied and bewailed them.” This is elegantly paraphrased by the ancient interpreter ; who, in general, appears to have had small knowledge of the language from which he made his paraphrase. “ Ut ipsa etiam corona popularis viso fletet tantæ crudelitatis horrore, nec sine lachrymis posset aspicere, quod fieri ipsa voluisset.” *i. e.* “ The surrounding crowds beheld this excess of cruelty with horror, and could not abstain from tears at a spectacle which themselves had demanded.”

“ Unto them the fire, administered by their cruel tormentors, was as if it had been cold.” These words do not merit the censure of candid and intelligent critics. And yet it has been remarked, “ That *that* fire, which would have scorched an unbeliever,

“ liever, appears to have proved cool and  
 “ pleasant to the godly.” Any one who  
 has a moderate share of critical knowledge,  
 and of candor, must perceive, that the ex-  
 pression, *the fire was cold*, or, *as if it*  
*had been cold*, is used in a comparative sense;  
 and that it has no relation whatever to the  
 properties of fire. Were it literally under-  
 stood, it would contradict the words which  
 the writer of the epistle had just used.  
 “ *They despised the torments of this world,*  
 “ *and, through endurance for one hour, re-*  
 “ *deemed themselves from everlasting punish-*  
 “ *ment.*”

Besides, as it was the intention of the e-  
 pistle to extol the patience of the martyrs in  
 enduring torture, it would have been imper-  
 tinent and absurd to have represented the  
 fire as become incapable of inflicting torture.  
 Thus the best refutation of so pitiful a cavil  
 is to be found in the words of the text it-  
 self.

Pag. 4.

" In like manner, after they were condemned to be exposed to wild beasts."

Archbishop Wake renders the words thus :

" In like manner, those who were con-

demned to the beasts, and *kept a long*

*time in prison.*" He supposed, that the

persons, of whom the epistle had hitherto

spoken, were burnt alive, and that others

were exposed to wild beasts. This I ima-

gine to be altogether erroneous. The pur-

pose of the fire was to force the Christians

to apostatise; but the fire was not the pun-

ishment of those who persevered in the

faith. The expression, *kept a long time in*

*prison*, is an interpolation, without authori-

ty from the text. It is true, that the word

χρόνος occurs in the Greek, but nothing fol-

lows which can be connected with that

word; and it has been supposed, that *ἐπαθόν*,

or something similar, ought to be put in its

place.

K

" Sharp



“ Sharp shells.” Archbishop Wake says, “ sharp spikes.” Were it proper to modernize the narrative, *broken bottles* would give an English reader a competent notion of the nature of this species of torture.

Pag. 5.

“ The Proconsul.” L. Statius Quadratus, who was consul under Antoninus Pius, A. U. C. 895. Valesius, not. ad Euseb. l. iv. p. 71. shews, that Statius Quadratus was proconsul in Asia, in the *seventh* year of Marcus Aurelius, Pollio in the *eighth*, and Severus in the *ninth*.

“ To have pity on his *youth*.” τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ καλοικεῖν. “ His time of life.” For the proconsul used the same expression in speaking to the aged Polycarp. It is plain from the narrative, that Germanicus was in the full vigour of life; I have therefore followed Valesius, and translated ἡλικία by the word *youth*.

Pag. 6.

Pag. 6.

"This man had prevailed on himself," &c.  
 οὗτος δὲ ἦν ὁ παραβιάσάμενος ἑαυτὸν τε καὶ ἑνας  
 προσελθεῖν ἑκόντας. Quintus had used *efforts*  
 to get the better of his own fears, and of the  
 fears of the other persons whom he persua-  
 ded to appear with him before the procon-  
 sul, of their own accord, without waiting  
 to be dragged before the tribunal by their  
 accusers. This seems to be the import of  
 the passage.

"For the gospel hath not so taught."  
 This alludes to the evangelical precept of  
 flying from persecution. The Christians of  
 Smyrna repeatedly inculcate this precept.  
 They had seen, that the persons who were  
 most eager to present themselves before the  
 judgement-seat of the Heathen magistrate,  
 were the aptest to shrink at the approach of  
 tortures; and that the warmest spirits were  
 not the most resolute.

K 2

Pag. 7.

## Pag. 7.

“ Indeed he could not be concealed; for  
 “ they who betrayed him were of his own  
 “ household.” I have sometimes thought,  
 that this was an interpolated passage. There  
 is no reason for believing, that the lad here  
 mentioned was, properly speaking, of the  
 household of Polycarp. Besides, a lad who  
 was constrained by tortures to reveal the  
 lurking-place of Polycarp, can scarcely be  
 said to have *betrayed* him, in the sense of  
 the passage of scripture to which the writer  
 alludes.

## Pag. 8.

“ Irenarch.” It was the business of the  
*Irenarchæ*, other where called *Præpositi pa-*  
*cis*, to search for and apprehend seditious  
 persons, and those who disturbed the public  
 tranquillity. Archbishop Wake has on the  
 margin, *Justice of the peace*, which does by  
 no means give a proper notion of the office.  
 Bishop Parker mistakes the nature of the of-  
 fice,



fice, and the character of Herod the Irenarch; for he says, that “Polycarp was apprehended by a fanatic and hot-headed justice of the peace.” See *Demonstration of the divine authority of the Christian religion*, p. 383.

We have no officer of the law with us, whose duty is precisely the same with that of *Irenarch*; although we have different officers who may occasionally discharge the same sort of duty. The office is better known on the continent.

In the original there is added [ὁ καὶ κληρονόμος], which means one *elect*ed or *chosen*. I know not what particular office is here understood. Smith, in his notes on the epistle of the church of Smyrna, has endeavoured to explain the passage; but his interpretation shews, that he was not master of the subject.

Pag. 11.

“His leg was wounded.” ὡς καὶ ἀπρτυγῆ-

ται

καὶ τὸ ἀνίστημι. Literally, "so that his skin  
 " was stripped," *ut ei tibia cute nudaretur*. I  
 know not why Archbishop Wake should  
 have translated it, "he hurt his thigh."

"As he entered in, there came a voice  
 " from heaven," &c. Various have been  
 the sentiments of learned men concerning  
 this part of the narrative.

1. It has been hinted, that the story of  
 the voice is altogether fictitious.

2. It has been supposed, that some one of  
 the Christian bystanders uttered the words.

3. Others hold the voice to have been mi-  
 raculous.

1. Dr Middleton appears to have inclined  
 to the first opinion. He says, p. 124.  
 "When Polycarp was entering the lists, in  
 " which he was to be burnt, *there was so*  
 " *great a tumult that no body could be heard,*  
 " But there came a voice to him from hea-  
 " ven, saying, *Be strong, Polycarp, and*  
 " *acquit thyself like a man :* and though no  
 " body

" body saw who it was that spake; yet many of the brethren heard the voice."

The meaning of this eminent controversialist seems to be, " That, according to the epistle from the church of Smyrna, many of the brethren heard the words; while, at the same time, there was such a tumult that no one could be heard: and that there is a contradiction in this which must weaken the authority of the narrative."

As to this, it will be observed, 1. That the contradiction is not in the original narrative, but arises merely from the manner of abridging it. The brethren heard the voice while Polycarp was entering into the stadium; but the uproar of the enthusiastic and unfeeling multitude arose when Polycarp appeared within the stadium.

2. When the writers of the epistle said, " That there was so great a tumult that no one could be heard," it is probable, that they



they meant no more, than "that, for a season, the noise and confusion were exceedingly great."

3. Dr Middleton should not have supposed, that the story contained any contradiction, even according to his own method of relating it, unless he had previously proved, that a voice from heaven cannot be heard amidst "the madness of the people."

I must not dismiss this opinion of Dr Middleton's without making some farther reflections on it. 1. He says, "That Polycarp entered the lists in which he was to be burnt." This expression may tend to mislead an inattentive reader; as it is calculated to convey the notion, "that the death of Polycarp, by burning, was an event expected at that time." 2. "*Though no body saw who it was that spake,*" is an odd expression. It seems to have been employed, in order to have it believed, that the words were uttered by some one of the spec-

rators. This, however, is inconsistent with what Dr Middleton insinuates, that in the confusion which then prevailed no words could be heard. 3. He says, "*Yet many of the brethren heard the voice.*" Hence he seems to infer, that there were Christians present who did not hear the voice. Of this, however, there is no sufficient evidence. The words of the epistle, as published by Archbishop Usher, are: τὴν δὲ φωνὴν τῶν ἡμετέρων οἱ παρόντες ἤκουσαν. The obvious sense of which is, that "such of our people as were present," or "the brethren present, heard the voice." Eusebius has, τῶν ἡμετέρων οἱ πολλοὶ παρόντες, which means, "the multitude of the brethren who were present;" or, "the brethren, who were there in great numbers."

II. It has been supposed, "That some one of the Christian bystanders uttered the words."

Of this opinion Le Clerc appears to have

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been:

been: "*Vocem audivit qua fortis esse et viriliter se gerere jubebatur, quæ, cum a quo profecta esset, animadvertisset nemo, e cœlo missa esse credita est.*" *Hist. Eccles.* p. 726.

The opinion of Le Clerc has been followed by many whom it is unnecessary to mention.

There may be truth in this conjecture. The stadium at Smyrna was situated on the side of an eminence; hence words uttered from that eminence may have seemed to have issued from heaven, in the opinion of those persons who stood at the entrance into the stadium.

After sixteen hundred years have elapsed, we read of the martyrdom of Polycarp in the retirement and quiet of our closets. The story may chance for a while to affect the sensibility of our nature; yet the impression is soon effaced by the remembrance of other events, more interesting, because more recent.



cent. In a far different manner were the minds of the disciples of Polycarp agitated at that important moment, when they saw him entering the stadium. It was not strange that they should look for some remarkable circumstances to accompany the sufferings and death of their aged and venerable pastor.

In this situation of mind, and with such expectations, they might possibly consider *that* to be miraculous, which we, in the hour of cold reflection, may ascribe to natural causes. A zealous and affectionate Christian might have cried out, "Be of good courage, Polycarp, and quit thyself like a man." The words in the original are more concise and forcible. *"ἰσχυε, Πολύκαρπε, καὶ ἀνδρίζε."*

The Christians of Smyrna heard those encouraging words, but saw not from whence they proceeded: they therefore concluded, that it was a voice from heaven, comforting

the champion of their faith in the hour of severest trial. *This* may be termed *credulity* by some; but it is not the credulity of visionaries, who imagine that they hear words which are not spoken, or who ascribe words to the Divinity unworthy of his nature and attributes. The voice, be it miraculous or be it natural, uttered a sentiment grave and elevated, and admirably adapted to the solemnity of the occasion.

III. Others, however, hold the voice to have been miraculous.

It might seem presumptuous to say, that the voice *could* not be supernatural. We have no authority to limit the operations of the Deity, and he may interpose in a thousand ways where we cannot discern the propriety of his interposition. Surely then it would be too bold for us to determine, that he did not, where *even we* may discern propriety in his interposition. This subject merits a more particular consideration. I will  
endeavour

endeavour to treat it on the principles of a religious Theist.

By a *religious Theist*, I understand one who has no knowledge of Christianity, but who believes in the unity of God, in his providence, and moral attributes: one who worships God alone, and considers the adoration of inferior deities as proceeding from the fears or caprice of the multitude, or from the devices of unprincipled and crafty legislators: one, in a word, who holds, that all the blandishments of life, and even life itself, must be renounced in the cause of truth. On the principles of such a Theist I would now attempt to argue.

I desire that I may be understood as speaking of a *religious Theist*; for I well know, that there is a different character, which in some features may resemble this, and that is, a *politic Theist*.

He also, as it would seem, believes in the unity of God, and in his providence, and  
moral



moral attributes; and he holds, that religious worship is due to God alone, to the TO "EN. yet he is not so enamoured with truth as to be inclined to sacrifice all for her charms. He holds, that the vulgar must worship divinities as gross as their own apprehensions; that a prudent legislator ought to satisfy himself with rendering subservient to civil government those superstitions which he cannot suppress; and that a wise man should comply with the notions of his age and the ordinances of his country. On the principles of this *politic Theist* I attempt not to argue.

Let us suppose, that a *religious Thrift* had been required to venerate the goddess Fortune, and to revile the memory of Marcus Antoninus, would he not have made this answer? "I will not venerate an imaginary Fortune; for I believe in *Providence*: neither will I revile the memory of the divine philosopher, who has taught me to  
 " say,

“ say, *Wherefore should I wish to live in a*  
 “ *world without a God and without Provi-*  
 “ *dence.*” Would not this religious Theist  
 have endured the worst of tortures rather  
 than belie his sentiments, disclaim his belief  
 in Providence, and utter contumelious words  
 against the great assertor of that Providence?  
 Certainly he would; and his perseverance  
 would never have been imputed to what the  
 Stoics term *mere obstinacy*.

If it should be objected, “ That a religious  
 “ Theist could not be exposed to such a trial  
 “ of his constancy; and that no multitude  
 “ of fanatics could ever require him to ve-  
 “ nerate Fortune as a divinity, or to revile  
 “ Marcus Antoninus.” I answer, by re-  
 minding the objector of the words of the  
 proconsul of Asia to the aged Polycarp,  
 “ Swear by the fortune of Cæsar; revile  
 “ Christ.”

But let us consider how a *religious Theist*  
 would act in another case, which is surely  
 supposeable.

supposable. A pestilence rages in Ephesus, which has baffled all the powers of medicine. The despairing people, in this extremity of distress, require that processions be made, and litanies sung, in order to obtain mercy from Diana, the averter of pestilence, and the tutelary divinity of the Ephesians: they also require, that the image of the Goddess *which fell from heaven* should, on this occasion, be venerated with peculiar honour; what would be the conduct of a *religious Theist*, after he had endeavoured in vain to remove himself beyond the reach of this idolatrous and enthusiastic multitude? he would say,

“ Friends and fellow-citizens, The pesti-  
 “ lence is a calamity arising from natural  
 “ causes, and from the providence of God;  
 “ your Diana is an imaginary being, who  
 “ can neither produce nor avert the evil  
 “ under which you perish; and as for that  
 “ image, which you say fell from heaven,  
 “ it is in truth a vine stock, grubbed out of



“ a field in the neighbourhood of the city. I  
 “ will not make processions, or sing litanies,  
 “ in honour of a fabulous divinity; neither  
 “ will I venerate this worthless image, to  
 “ which the craft of priests, and the cre-  
 “ dulity of the people, have ascribed a cele-  
 “ stial origin.” Would not the enraged  
 multitude have cried out, “ Away with the  
 “ ungodly?” and would they not have in-  
 flicted all the torments which superstition  
 could devise on this assertor of the truth?  
 If, in that moment, an unknown voice had  
 been heard, exhorting him to courage and  
 constancy, would he not have supposed, that  
 it was *something divine*? and would not the  
 favourers of his opinions, who beheld his  
 courage and constancy, have reported this  
 voice as *something divine*, without exposing  
 themselves to the scorn and censure of other  
*religious Theists*.

Pag. 12.

“ The proconsul began to exhort him,”

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&c.

&c. We have seen that this proconsul was L. Statius Quadratus, consul in the reign of Antoninus Pius, A. U. C. 895. He had been a rhetorician, and was wont to make extemporary declamations on the topics agitated in the schools. Κωδρατιῶν ὁ ὕπατος, αὐτοσχεδιάζων τὰς θεικὰς ὑποθέσεις. *Philostatus*, de Vit. Sophist. ii. 7. p. 576. edit. Olearii. This circumstance is remarkable. Quadratus had been bred in the schools of eloquence, and was wont to argue on either side of any question: having now become a judge, he undertook to persuade or confute Polycarp. Had it not been for his office of judge under a Heathen government, he could, with equal facility, have argued for the other side, and encouraged Polycarp to persist in his opinions, even on the principles of the philosophy which happened to be fashionable in those times. It is to be lamented, that so little of the rhetor's argument has been preserved. One topic only remains;

remains; a topic well adapted to the eloquence of a person whose studies led him to search for what was *plausible*, not for what was *true*. To Germanicus he said, "Have pity on thy *youth*;" but to Polycarp, "Reverence thine *old age*."

"Swear by the Fortune of *Cæsar*." There was a statue of Fortune placed in the bed-chamber of the Roman Emperors. It appears to have been considered as the pælladium of the empire, and as a symbol of supreme power. Julius Capitolinus, in the life of Antoninus Pius, thus speaks. "Ter-  
 tiâ die cum se gravari videret, M. Ant-  
 nino remp. et filiam præsentibus præfectis  
 commendavit, *Fortunamque auream quæ*  
*in cubiculo principum poni solebat, trans-*  
*ferri ad eum jussit.*" p. 21. See also p. 25. Ælius Spartianus, in the life of Severus, says, "*Fortunam regiam, quæ comitari prin-*  
*cipes et in cubiculis poni solebat, geminare*  
 M 2 "statuerat,



“ statuerat, ut sacratissimum simulacrum u-  
 “ trique relinqueret filiorum.” p. 73.

To determine the precise import of *swearing by the Fortune of Cæsar* is difficult: some sort of veneration was certainly meant. It may appear singular, that Polycarp should be required to venerate Fortune, and, at the same time, to express his abhorrence of those who worshipped not the gods.

“ Then Polycarp said,— Away with the  
 “ ungodly.” This incident is described in so lively colours, that the action of Polycarp is brought before our eyes, and we seem to hear the words which he uttered. There are few finer portraits in any history. They who chuse to make Polycarp say what, in their opinion, he ought to have said, interpret his words in a prophetic sense, as implying, not a *wish* that the ungodly might be taken away or cut off, but a *prediction*, that such would be their fate.

But it would seem, that the words ought

to be understood in their obvious meaning. We learn from ecclesiastical history, that Polycarp was a person of a warm temper, and apt to express his sentiments with some degree of asperity. Marcion, the Heresiarch, meeting Polycarp, said, "Knowest thou me?" "I know thee," answered Polycarp, "to be the first born of Satan." This is related by Irenæus, *ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* l. iv. c. 14.

There is a passage in Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians, which, if Archbishop Wake's translation be just, shews, that the good man was sensible of this infirmity of his own temper. The words are: "§ 2. "But at present it is not granted unto me "to practise that which is written, *Be angry and sin not.*" Some doubt, however, may be entertained of the propriety of this translation. The original Greek here is lost; and all that remains is a barbarous and illiterate Latin version; which runs thus:

" Mihi

“ Mihi autem non est concessum modo ut  
 “ his scripturis dictum est, *irascimini et no-*  
 “ *lite peccare.*” The reader will judge,  
 whether the words can bear that interpreta-  
 tion which Archbishop Wake has adopted.

“ These fourscore and six years serve I  
 “ him.” Hence some have concluded, that  
 eighty-six years had elapsed since the time of  
 Polycarp’s conversion to Christianity: but  
 there is no reason for believing that Poly-  
 carp had ever been a Heathen. It is more  
 probable, that from his infancy he was edu-  
 cated in the faith of Christ. Certain it is,  
 that the passage in his epistle, which has  
 been produced in support of the opinion,  
 that Polycarp was a convert to Christianity,  
 means no such thing. He says, “ Paul glo-  
 “ ries of you in all the churches, who then  
 “ only knew God, *for we did not then know*  
 “ *him.*” By *we* is meant, not the writer,  
 but the people of Smyrna.

S. Basnage, *Annal.* i. p. 792. supposes, that  
 Polycarp,



Polycarp, by saying, that he had served Christ for *eighty-six years*, meant that he had been a bishop so long; and hence Basnage conjectures, that Polycarp was about 120 years old at the time of his martyrdom; as if Polycarp could not have said that he served Christ, without alluding to his Episcopal function!

Unless there are urgent reasons to the contrary, the most obvious meaning of words ought always to be followed. The words of Polycarp, in their most obvious meaning, seem to imply, that he had served Christ during the whole course of a long life, that is, for eighty-six years.

To this interpretation the words of Irenæus are opposed; who says, [ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. iv. c. 14.], ἐπιπολὺν γὰρ παρήμενε. ἢ παρὰ γηραλέος. But surely, one may say of a man who dies at the age of eighty-six, "that he had remained very long upon the earth, and was very old." The court of session in Scotland has subsisted for  
about

about 250 years, it has always been composed of fifteen judges, and sometimes the number of judges has been greater; yet during that period one judge alone [Sir Richard Maitland of Thirlestane] has attained to those years which some scrupulous critics will not allow to be extreme old age.

Pag. 13.

“ Since thou *ostentatiously* requirest me  
 “ to swear by what thou stilest *the Fortune*  
 “ of *Cæsar*,” &c. εὐ κενοδοξείας, &c. This, probably, alludes to the pomp of words which Quadratus may be supposed to have used in his exhortation to Polycarp.

“ Appoint a day, and hear.” Polycarp offered to make his *Apology* or defence, at the tribunal of the proconsul.

“ Go and persuade the multitude.” This answer of the proconsul expressed his contempt of Polycarp; as if he had said, “ I-maginest thou that I am to be convinced  
 “ by thy declamations? address thyself to

“ the assembled multitude, and make trial of  
 “ thine eloquence *there* !”

“ As for that multitude,” &c. The words have been understood by some to imply, “ I hold them unworthy of hearing my instruction.” And hence it has been supposed, that Polycarp erred in his answer, and that he ought to have been ready to render unto all men a reason for his faith. But where is the evangelical precept which enjoins us to set forth the grounds of our belief to all men, however unwilling they may be to afford us a patient hearing? It is plain, that the multitudes, assembled in the theatre at Smyrna, were not disposed to listen to the instruction of Polycarp. They were, humanly speaking, incapable of profiting by any thing that he could say in defence of Christianity.

If it should be remarked, that the divine grace might have wrought a miracle, and bestowed calmness, candour, and docility,

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on a frantic and superstitious rabble, the reply is obvious, that then the same divine grace would no doubt have instructed Polycarp to vindicate his Christian profession in presence of such auditors.

We read, in scripture, of the town-clerk of Ephesus, who pacified a tumult of the people by speaking nonsense adapted to their ignorance and prejudices; but Polycarp could not have looked for the same success in pleading the cause of Christianity against ignorance and prejudices.

Pag. 14.

“ For that I should *change* from the better to the worse is impossible.” The word rendered *change* is *μετάνοια*. Valesius, considers the word in the New-Testament sense, as implying repentance, or a change from the worse to the better; and therefore proposes to read *διάνοια*. But there is nothing solid in this criticism: *μετανοειν*, in classical Greek, implies, “ to change one’s opinion,”  
or,

or, "to take an after-thought;" and *μετά-  
νστα* means, "a change of opinion," in the  
abstract, without any relation to what is  
better, or worse.

Pag. 15.

"This is the teacher of Asia." The epi-  
stle, as published by Archbishop Usher, has  
"the teacher of irreligion;" ὁ τῆς ἀσεβείας  
διδάσκαλος. Eusebius, however, and the an-  
cient Latin version, read, "the teacher of  
"Asia." This removes the tautology, and  
appears to be the true reading.

"Philip, the president of the priests of  
"Asia." The cities of Asia had temples,  
holy rites, and festival days, in common.  
They had also a common priesthood, term-  
ed in the Roman law *Afiarchia*. Each city  
chose yearly an Afiarch. The deputies, sent  
to the general congress, reported the names  
of the persons so chosen; and out of their  
number the general congress selected *ten*.  
Valesius conjectures, that the Roman pro-

N. 2.

consul

consul chose one out of the *ten*, who was, in propriety of speech, *the Asiarch*, or as it is here translated, *the president of the priests of Asia*. It is probable, that the whole *ten* had the name of *Asiarchs*; although the proconsul of Asia may have received or assumed the privilege of nominating the president or chairman, who was, by way of eminence, styled *the Asiarch*. This subject, however, is not worthy of a formal disquisition. The office of Asiarch must have been expensive; for he who discharged it was obliged to exhibit public shews to the people.

Pag. 16.

“ Now it behoved that his vision should “ be fulfilled,” &c. Every circumstance concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp has afforded matter of controversy: his vision, in particular, has been the subject of much critical inquiry. “ The foresight of his “ death,” says Dr Middleton, *Inquiry*, p. 9.

“ and



“ and *the manner of it*, in the time of a  
 “ cruel persecution, when his person was  
 “ particularly hunted from village to vil-  
 “ lage, as the principal and destined sacri-  
 “ fice, may reasonably be considered as the  
 “ effect of *common prudence*, without recur-  
 “ ring to any thing miraculous.”

If Polycarp had only pretended to fore-  
 tell, that he was to suffer martyrdom, the  
 observation of Dr Middleton might have  
 been just: but Polycarp added, “ It behoves  
 “ me to be *burnt alive*.”

Now, it might be asked, “ How Polycarp  
 “ could foresee, by common prudence, that  
 “ he was to be *burnt alive* ? ”

Many Christians had already suffered death  
 at Smyrna; and yet not one of them had  
 been burnt alive. The *fire* mentioned in the  
 epistle of the church at Smyrna, was a spe-  
 cies of torture inflicted on the persons accu-  
 sed; but it was not the capital punishment  
 itself. This is fully explained by Dr Jortin,

*Remarks*

*Remarks on ecclesiastical history*, vol. 2. p. 416.  
 &c.

Of the many thousand Heathens assembled in the theatre at Smyrna; there was not one man who could have foreseen, by *common prudence*, that Polycarp was to be burnt alive: for they had all with one voice demanded, that Polycarp might be exposed to wild beasts; and had not their demand been out of season, he would have been exposed to wild beasts.

Thus it is plain, that *common prudence* could never have made Polycarp foretell that he was to be burnt alive.

If it should be observed, "That an *accidental* dream of a pillow on fire might have suggested to a *superstitious man* the notion, that he who lay on the pillow was to be burnt," it may be answered,  
 1. That here it is taken for granted, that the dream, or rather vision, of whose nature the inquiry is, must be ascribed to *accident*,  
 and

that Polycarp was a *superstitious man*. But waving this, let it be considered, 2. That the interpretation of omens and dreams had by degrees been reduced into a system among the Heathens; and that from the vision which Polycarp is reported to have seen, a Heathen would have derived a prognostic of some sudden good fortune. Now granting, though without evidence or probability, that Polycarp had imbibed and retained the Pagan superstitions in the matter of dreams, he might have drawn this inference from the vision of the burning pillow, that some prosperous event was soon to befall him. Nay more, let us suppose that, at that time, Polycarp considered his being called to suffer martyrdom as a *prosperous event*; yet still this dream could not have induced him to suppose, that his death by fire was thereby prognosticated. This persuasion, and confident belief, that he was to be burnt alive, must have been the effect of  
some



some impression for which we cannot account in an ordinary way.

Mr Toll, *Defence of Dr Middleton*, p. 37. supposes the story of the vision of Polycarp to have been feigned by the Christians of Smyrna. But in the same paragraph he says, "As to Polycarp's foretelling his death, " Dr Middleton *very justly* observes, that " the foresight of such an event, in the time " of cruel persecution, might be no proof " of a prophetic spirit."

For consistency's sake we must presume, that Mr Toll meant to say, that Polycarp, from probable conjecture, foretold his own death; but that the Christians of Smyrna falsely ascribed this foreknowledge to a divine vision.

It is, no doubt, a most effectual method of setting aside any evidence, which may thwart a favourite hypothesis, to call that evidence a falsehood; but it is a method  
1 which

which logicians ought to use sparingly; for to *prove*, not to *assert*, is their office.

Pag. 16.

“ The Jews above all, *as their manner is*,  
 “ were zealous in the business.” Le Clerc,  
 after having observed, that this zeal of the  
 Jews might seem strange, adds, “ That  
 “ the Jews detested Polycarp, *because he*  
 “ *greatly preferred the Christian religion to*  
 “ *the Jewish*: [quod etiam suam religionem  
 “ a Polycarpo oppugnari putarent; quia  
 “ *Christianam longè ei præferebat.*] *Hist. Ec-*  
*cles.* p. 727. The observation is incorrectly  
 expressed. Le Clerc ought to have said,  
 “ Because Polycarp taught, that Judaism  
 “ was abolished by the appearance of the  
 “ *Messias.*” But there appears to have been  
 another cause for this zeal of the Jews. They  
 perceived, that the Christians were obno-  
 xious to the Roman government; they fear-  
 ed that they themselves, who held many te-  
 nets in common with the Christians, might

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be

he comprehended in the persecution; and they strove to be distinguished as a sect altogether unconnected with the followers of Jesus. The truth is, that one who believed in the Jewish religion, could not have taken that test which the proconsul tendered to Polycarp. He might indeed have willingly reviled Christ; but he could not have cried out, "Away with the ungodly," or have sworn "by the Fortune of Cæsar."

"He sought to untie his sandals," &c. The minute circumstances in this part of the narrative are related with much simplicity. The office of untying the sandals was esteemed in ancient times to be one of the meanest, and was generally performed by slaves. From this passage, however, we learn, that it was sometimes performed by the young to the aged, in testimony of respect; and that the virtues of Polycarp had procured to him that mark of reverence before he had attained to old age.



Pag. 17.

“ The instruments belonging to execution.” Valeſius enumerates them thus: “ The pitched jacket, [*or tunica moleſta*], “ the chain, the nails, and the pillar to “ which Polycarp was to be bound.” It does not ſeem probable, that the *pitched jacket* was employed in the execution of Polycarp. It is true, that Nero, in order to conciliate the affections of the commons of Rome, was wont to clothe the Chriſtians in garments ſmeared with bitumen, and then to ſet fire to them; [*ſtammandi*, as Tacitus expreſſes it, *Ann.* xv. 38.]; but it does not appear that this mode of wanton cruelty was ever repeated. Had the ſufferings of Polycarp been attended with any circumſtances of this nature, it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that the Chriſtians of Smyrna would have omitted to mention them.

“ But when they prepared to faſten him “ with nails.” Le Clerc conjectures, *Hiſt.*

*Eccles.* p. 728. with great probability, that the fetters in which Polycarp was bound, were to have been fixed by nails to the stake, not that his hands were to have been pierced with nails. *That* would have greatly added to the torments of his execution; and it is not reasonable to suppose, that his tormentors had either power or inclination to dispense with it.

Pag. 18.

“ According to what was appointed and “foretold.” Καθὼς προηοίμασας ἢ προειρη-  
γώσας. This evidently alludes to the vision of the burning pillow; and therefore they who imagine, that the vision was invented by the Christians of Smyrna, ought, if they mean to be consistent, also to suppose, that this part of the prayer of Polycarp is to be ascribed to the same spirit of fiction.

“ Through the incorruption of the Holy “Ghost.” Perhaps the glorified bodies were supposed

supposed to be rendered incorruptible by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

Pag. 19.

"I magnify thee, with Jesus Christ," &c. This doxology is expressed by Eusebius in words somewhat different. "I magnify thee  
 " through the everlasting High Priest Jesus  
 " Christ, thy beloved Son; by whom, to  
 " thee, with him, in the Holy Spirit, be glo-  
 " ry, both now and for ever. Amen." The ancient Latin version differs, in some measure, from both. "I glorify thee through  
 " the everlasting High Priest, the all-mighty  
 " Jesus Christ; through whom, to thee,  
 " and with him, and with the Holy Spirit, be  
 " glory, now and for ever." Le Clerc remarks, That the reading in Eusebius is in a *style more apostolical* than the others, altho' all the readings do in effect convey the same sense. "Quæ omnia quamvis idem sonent,  
 " prima tamen lectio stylo apostolico magis  
 " consentanea est." *Hist. Eccles.* p. 729. It  
 would



would ill become the compiler of these notes to enter into the depths of ecclesiastical antiquity, and to determine what were the expressions actually employed by Polycarp.

“ Polycarp having finished his prayer, “ and pronounced *Amen*.” From the word, ἀναπέμφαντος, here used, Valesius supposes, that Polycarp uttered his prayer with a low voice, and pronounced *Amen* aloud. The observation is unworthy of so learned a man. Had Polycarp pronounced his prayer with a low voice, how could it have been heard by the Christians present? It would have been improper for him to have prayed *under his breath*, [tacitè ac submissâ voce]; for it is obvious, that he meant, in this prayer, to make a confession of his faith, to declare the revelation which he had received, to acknowledge the divine support vouchsafed to him, and to excite his flock to follow the example of their bishop, in faith, resignation, and constancy. Valesius endeavours

to confirm his conjecture by a passage in the account of the martyrdom of Pionius.

“ Cumque Pionius oculos clausisset, turba illum animum egisse suspicabatur: sed ipse secreto precabatur. Cumque precandi finem fecisset, oculos aperuit. Jamque flamma sublimis ascendebat, cum hilari vultu postremum *Amen* pronuntians,” &c. This passage proves, that Pionius prayed in secret; and just as the flames were encircling him, cried out *Amen*, in evidence of his submission to the will, and confidence in the promises of God. But surely this cannot serve to strengthen the conjecture, that Polycarp prayed, *tacite et demissa voce*, although his words were heard by the Christians present, and, through their means, have been transmitted to posterity.

“ The fire, forming itself into a vaulted chamber.” From the manner in which this circumstance is related, there seems little doubt, that it happened as it is related; and

and there can be no doubt, that the Christians of Smyrna considered it to be supernatural. But here this important question occurs, Was the fact miraculous? Dr Middleton, *Inquiry*, p. 220. says, " That this  
 " appearance might easily happen, from the  
 " common effects of the wind, or *something*  
 " *at least so like it*, as to afford matter e-  
 " nough to a superstitious fancy to supply  
 " the rest." It must be confessed, that this manner of accounting for the circumstance related by the Christians of Smyrna is not worthy of a man of science.

The adversaries of Dr Middleton have not spared him in their animadversions on this passage. Dr Church says, *Vindication of the miraculous powers*, p. 343. " How a-  
 " ny common effects of the wind could  
 " make the fire encompass the saint's body,  
 " as in a circle, and prevent its having any  
 " power to burn it, so that his enemies  
 " were obliged to dispatch him with a sword,  
 " requires



“ requires a much stronger imagination than  
 “ mine to form any notion of, and, I be-  
 “ lieve, the learned and ingenious Doctor  
 “ himself found some difficulty in concei-  
 “ ving this, by his adding the words, *or*  
 “ *something at least so like it*; which leave  
 “ the matter *undetermined*, and seem to al-  
 “ low his readers full liberty, provided they  
 “ will reject the miracle, to imagine what-  
 “ ever they have a mind to. He will not  
 “ directly say, that the extraordinary event  
 “ was owing *altogether to the wind*: he does  
 “ not assign any other cause to which it may  
 “ fairly be imputed: he would have the  
 “ readers fancy to supply the rest; though,  
 “ really, the only way to solve the difficul-  
 “ ty, is to admit the plain account of the  
 “ miracle.”

It is one of the phenomena of the con-  
 troversial world, that writers, in many of  
 their opinions discordant, happen sometimes  
 to be ranged on the same side of a particular

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controversy.

controversy. This was the case of Mr Jackson and Dr Church, in the question concerning the miraculous powers. Accordingly Dr Church thus speaks of Mr Jackson. "He has given this so humourous  
 " and just a turn, that I cannot forbear  
 " borrowing his words. *The history says*  
 " *nothing of a wind, or any thing like it.*  
 " *But I will for once allow the Doctor to raise*  
 " *a wind. It must, as the case is represent-*  
 " *ed, be a wind that blew not from any point*  
 " *of the compass: for during this supposed*  
 " *wind, the body was encompassed all round*  
 " *with flames."* Remarks, p. 12.

The harmony of Dr Church and Mr Jackson has been so perfect on this occasion, that they may be said to have agreed in misunderstanding the sense of their adversary.

Although Dr Middleton has not expressed himself with all that perspicuity that might have been expected; yet his meaning is, that *the appearance, of which the Christians of*

Smyrna

Smyrna speak, or something like that appearance, might have happened by the effects of the wind; not that the appearance might have happened by the effects of the wind, or something like the wind, as his two antagonists concur in understanding him.

Dr Church applauds the *humour* and *justness* of the turn which Mr Jackson has given to this passage. Some readers, perhaps, may think that the eulogy is misapplied. There seems not to be much *humour* in likening Dr Middleton to a forcerer; who, according to the vulgar notion, can raise a wind. Neither is there much *justness* in denying, that the appearance of the flames was produced by wind: for whether the appearance was fortuitous or preternatural, it is reasonable to suppose, that wind or air was the agent. And indeed the Christians of Smyrna considered it in this light; for they liken the flames “to the sail of a ship  
“filled with the wind.”



The dispassionate reader will judge, whether the vaulted chamber, and the flames encircling the martyr, may not have been immediately owing to a natural cause.

Polycarp was placed at a stake or pillar, in a hollow place, towards the middle of a large building, open at the top, and crouded with spectators on every side. It might be a subject for the examination of the curious, whether the flames issuing from the wood placed round the body of the martyr, would not naturally assume that appearance, so lively described by the Christians of Smyrna, especially if the weather was at that time still and serene.

This, however, will not exclude the notion of a divine agency; but will rather show in what manner events were predisposed for the manifestation of that agency. It will always be remembered, that when Polycarp entered the theatre, there was no intention of burning him alive. The Pagan  
and

and Jewish spectators believed, that, unless he apostatized, he would be exposed to wild beasts. Polycarp alone, and the Christians to whom he had related his vision, knew, "that it behoved him to exchange this life, "by fire, for the sake of Christ." Contrary to the intention of the proconsul, and contrary to the expectation of the beholders, Polycarp was placed at the stake, and was burnt alive, while the flames assumed that appearance which is described in the epistle from the church of Smyrna.

The serene constancy of Polycarp in the midst of tortures, assured the Christians, that he had truly spoken, when he uttered these memorable words, "He who enableth "me to endure the fire, will also enable me "to abide unmoved in the pile, although "you do not fasten me with nails." This also may serve, in some measure, to obviate an exception of Dr Middleton's, as to a *vain profusion of miracles*; in which he seems obliquely

likely to allude to the narrative of the martyrdom of Polycarp. *Inquiry*, p. 126. Note [2].

Page 20.

"We also perceived a fragrant smell, as  
"of incense, or of other costly spices." Dr  
Middleton, p. 125, has made a free para-  
phrase of this part of the relation. "And  
"so sweet a smell *issued from him all the*  
"while, as if it had been the smoke of  
"frankincense, or some rich spices." The  
words of the original are: *Kai γὰρ ἐωδία-  
το αὐτὸς ἀτελαβόμεθα, ὡς κιβανῶν πικρῶς, ἢ  
ἄλλων τινῶν τῶν τιμιωτέρων ἀρωμάτων.* The learned  
reader will perceive, that, in this passage,  
there is no mention of a sweet smell *which*  
*issued from him*, [or from the body of Poly-  
carp]; and that the words *all the while*, are  
altogether to be ascribed to the fancy of the  
paraphrast.

It seems also worthy of observation, that  
the authors of the epistle relate this circum-  
stance,



stance, of the sweet odour, in the course of the narrative, and according to the order of events, without drawing any inference from it. Perhaps they thought it preternatural. It was more probably accidental. The wood for burning the martyr was brought from the work-shops and the baths; and it is not strange, that some sorts of resinous or aromatic wood should have been mixed in the pile.

“ When the ungodly saw that the body  
 “ could not be consumed by the fire.” *ὅτι  
 τὸ πῦρ οὐ δυνάμειεν κατακαῖναι.* The ancient Latin ver-  
 sion has in this place attained to the sense of  
 the original: “ *Eum non posse comburi.*”  
 And yet Dr Church, p. 343. speaks of  
 “ the fire having no power to burn the bo-  
 “ dy of Polycarp, so that his enemies were  
 “ obliged to dispatch him with a sword.”

The author of *The two previous questions*,  
 p. 31. says, “ That God should reveal it to  
 “ Polycarp that he should be burnt alive,

“ and

“ and then should *preserve* him from the  
 “ fire, is not easily to be believed; that the  
 “ church of Smyrna should believe and call  
 “ him a *prophet*, or say, that *every word* he  
 “ spoke was fulfilled, in contradiction to  
 “ fact, is ground for jealousy of *their vera-*  
 “ *city.*”

Here the author collects the substance of what he had spread over several preceding pages. In this passage, however, there is a mistiness of argument, by which the writings of the author of *The two previous questions* are generally distinguished. He seems to say, that we have ground for suspecting the veracity of the Christians of Smyrna, because they believed Polycarp to be a prophet, in contradiction to fact.—This would appear to impeach their judgement rather than their veracity.

But indeed neither their judgement, nor their *veracity*, is in the least affected by this part of their narrative.

Polycarp

Polycarp said, that *it behoved him to be burnt alive*. He supposed, that this event had been revealed to him; and to it he undoubtedly alluded in the prayer which he uttered previous to his martyrdom. If Polycarp was not burnt alive, we must admit, that it is difficult to comprehend how the church of Smyrna could have said, that "every word spoken by him either was fulfilled, or would hereafter be fulfilled." Polycarp, among his very last words, spake of the revelation of his being to be burnt alive. Now, if he was not burnt alive, such words were not fulfilled at the time of writing the epistle; nor, in the nature of the thing, could they afterwards be fulfilled.

There is a mistake common to this author, with Dr Church, and many others, who have treated of the epistle from the church of Smyrna.

They imagine, that Polycarp was not burnt

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alive;



*alive*; or, in other words, that he did not die by fire.

The tenor of the epistle from the church of Smyrna gives no authority for this supposition. The epistle does not say, that Polycarp was alive when the executioner pierced his body. It says, indeed, "That the ungodly saw, that the fire *could not* [or "did not"] *consume his body*." That circumstance, however, is foreign to the manner of Polycarp's death, as supposed to have been revealed to him.

Had Polycarp declared, "That it had been revealed to him, that he should be brought to the stake, and *there* have his *body consumed by fire*;" and if, in fact, the fire did not consume his body, we must have admitted, either that Polycarp attempted to foretell what did not come to pass, or that the circumstance of the fire not consuming his body, was erroneously related.

But if we understand the epistle in its most obvious

obvious sense, and without recurring to the glosses of careless or prejudiced interpreters, we shall find, that there is no diversity between the revelation and the manner in which Polycarp died. It was revealed, that he should be burnt alive, and he *was* burnt alive. But it was not revealed, that the fire should consume his body; and therefore the Christians of Smyrna might believe, that Polycarp was a prophet, when he foretold, that he should be burnt alive; and yet might, with absolute consistency, relate, that the fire did not consume his body."

"Abundance of blood issued forth." In the MS. which Archbishop Usher used, it is said: ἐξῆλθε περιστέρα ἢ πλῆθος αἵματος, i. e. "a *dove* issued forth, and abundance of blood."

Here two questions arise: 1. Whether we ought to suppose, that the incident of *the dove* was originally in the epistle from the church of Smyrna? and, 2. Supposing it

to be an interpolation, by what means did it come into the text?

As to the *first* question, it would seem, that the incident of *the dove* was not originally in the epistle from the church at Smyrna.

1. It is certain, that there is no mention of *the dove* in any MS. of Eusebius now known, nor in Rufinus, the paraphrast of Eusebius. This affords a presumption, that Eusebius knew nothing of it.

Mr Toll indeed observes, *Remarks upon Mr Church's Vindication of the miraculous powers*, p. 13. that "Eusebius seems to have  
 " taken some pains in smoothing the whole  
 " story over, in order to render it more  
 " credible than he found it. He was not  
 " willing quite to lose the miracle; and  
 " could no otherwise preserve it, than by  
 " dropping some circumstances, and soften-  
 " ing others; and this, whoever compares  
 " his method of relating it with the origi-  
 " nal



“ nal letter translated by Archbishop Wake,  
 “ will, I think, be convinced was the truth  
 “ of the case.”

After comparing the epistle itself with the transcript in Eusebius, the reader will judge whether the observation made by Mr Toll is well founded. The two most material differences between the accounts are, that the epistle says, that Polycarp was in the midst of the pile “ as bread that is baked;” whereas Eusebius omits that similitude. This, surely, makes no variation in the matter of the narrative; for the same notion is expressed in the words retained by Eusebius. “ Like gold or silver heated in the furnace.” The other difference is, that Eusebius says, the executioner stabbed Polycarp with a *sword*; whereas the epistle says, that he stabbed him with a *dagger*! [Ξιφιδιον.]

2. Should it still be held probable, that Eusebius might have been induced to omit the circumstance of the *dove*, as tending to discredit

discredit the narrative of the church of Smyrna, it may be remarked in reply, that Nicephorus also is silent concerning it; and surely it was not the genius of Nicephorus to suppress circumstances because they were absurd or improbable.

3. That a dove should have issued from the body of Polycarp, when pierced with a dagger or little sword, is a circumstance much more wonderful than any other in the narrative; and yet the writers of the epistle make no observations on it, nor draw any inference from it. This seems, in an especial manner, to merit our attention. The other circumstances, which appear miraculous or strange, are particularly, and, as it were, anxiously related; such as the prophetic vision, the voice from heaven, the arched flames, and the quantity of blood which issued from the wound; but the *dove*, which, if true, was the most wonderful thing of

of all, is mentioned in a cold and transient manner.

Other arguments have been offered for proving, that *the dove* was not originally in the epistle from the church of Smyrna; but they seem to be of small account.

Thus, for example, Dr Brooke has asserted, "That there is not a syllable of *the dove* to be found in the Greek *Menæalogy*." See *Examination of Middleton's Free Inquiry*, p. 98. Dr Brooke found this remark in Archbishop Wake, *Apostolical Fathers*, p. 57.; and he has used it on the authority of that eminent writer. Yet it is a strange remark; for the only evidence at all that we have of the *dove* being in the Greek copies of the epistle, arises from the Greek menologists. Smith *ad Ignatium*, pref. p. antep. says, "*Acta martyrii S. Polycarpi*" "D. Ufferius Armachanus è *Menologio Græ-*" "co, MS. n. 238. fol. 14. b. in archivis Ba-

" roccianis bibliothecæ Oxoniensis reposti-

" to



“ to—edidit.” And again : “ Aliud ex-  
 “ emplar huic par et geminum quoque ex-  
 “ rat in bibliotheca Cæsarea Vindobonensi  
 “ in *Menologio Græco mensis Februarii*, ut  
 “ patet ex Petri Lambecii *Commentario-*  
 “ *rum* l. viii. p. 88.”

P. Halloix published a life of Polycarp, said to be the work of one Pionius, in his treatise *De vitis illustrium orientalium*, tom. i. Pionius surely may be styled a *Greek menologist*. He bears all the characteristics of a writer of that class; zeal for trifles, credulousness, and consummate effrontery. He too has the story of the *dove*.

Dr Brooke has also observed, “ That there  
 “ is not a syllable of the *dove* in the Roman  
 “ martyrology.” To what particular book he here alludes is not obvious. Bollandus, in *Acta Sanctorum*, t. 2. p. 691. 26th Jan. has a long chapter concerning Polycarp, and the other martyrs of Smyrna; but he gives us no history of the death of Polycarp  
 from

from the Roman martyrology; although, with a credulity which would be astonishing in another author, he has adopted the narrative of Pionius entire. In that tremendous mass of absurdity, the *Aurea legenda*, by Jacobus de Voragine, [edit. 1476.], there is not a syllable of Polycarp at all.

The *dove* is a circumstance on which Dr Middleton insists with peculiar pleasure. He supposes, that it was mentioned by the Christians of Smyrna in their epistle. “ In the case of miracles, says he, there is one circumstance common to all the writers who attest them, as well in the earlier as in the later days, that though their assertions be strong, their instances are weak; and when, in proof of what they affirm, they descend to alledge any particular facts, they are usually so unlucky in the choice of them, that instead of strengthening, they weaken the credit of their general affirmation, and, *from the absurdity of*

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“ each

“ each miracle related by them, furnish a  
 “ fresh objection to their power of working  
 “ any. This the reader can hardly fail to  
 “ observe, from the examples already pro-  
 “ duced ; to which I shall add one or two  
 “ more of the most considerable, which are  
 “ transmitted to us from the same age.” *In-*  
*quiry*, p. 123.

The *first* which he mentions is the story  
 of the *dove*.

When we see an appeal to our judgements  
 made in a smooth and specious style, we lit-  
 tle think, that the writer means to take ad-  
 vantage of our inattention.

Perhaps this observation may not be ap-  
 plicable to the passage just quoted from Dr  
 Middleton ; yet here there is, at least, an  
 example of the controversial slight of hand,  
 in which some writers are so expert, that,  
 contrary to the practice of other jugglers,  
 they deceive themselves as well as the spec-  
 tators.

The



The thing which Dr Middleton attempts to prove is, "That miracles were not wrought by any Christians in the second century." And how? because the manner in which the pretended miracles of that century are related, discovers so much credulity and want of judgement, as to shew, that the relaters themselves had no power of working miracles; that is, "A, had no power of working miracles, for B, the relater of the miracles, had not." How would Dr Middleton have triumphed, if any of the primitive fathers had argued in a mode so illogical?

In order to shew, "that none of the Christians of the second century wrought miracles, as the relaters of the pretended miracles of that century wrought none themselves," Dr Middleton objects to the credibility of a miracle, which is not said to have been wrought either by the relater, or by any other Christian.

If a dove proceeded from the pierced body of Polycarp, it was a miraele not wrought by any of the Christians of Smyrna, but by the immediate power of God, without their ministry.

The argument, therefore, on Dr Middleton's own hypothesis, amounts to this : " If  
 " God did not cause a dove to issue from  
 " the body of Polycarp, the Christians in  
 " the second century had no power of  
 " working miracles."

Whether the dove issued, or did not issue, from the body of Polycarp, is wide of the question as to the ceasing or the endurance of miraculous powers in the Christian church : for *there* the question is not, what the Creator could do, but what he thought fit to do, by the ministration of his creatures.

Had Dr Middleton attended to this distinction, he might, perhaps, have been induced to spare some part of his learned labours,

as well for proving, that the *dove* was originally in the epistle from the church of Smyrna, as for proving, that the story was not true.

But it may be presumed, that Dr Middleton had a farther aim in attempting to prove, that the *dove* was originally in the epistle; and it is this. If the Christians of Smyrna, in the second century, imagined, that God caused a dove to issue from the body of Polycarp, they were *visionaries*; and if they affirmed this without believing it, they were *knaves*; at least there was a mixture of *folly* and *bad faith* in the church of Smyrna. Now, holding this to have been the case, the authority of such evidences to miraculous facts will be greatly impaired.

If a reasoner be allowed at his pleasure to place his antagonist in the midst of the dilemma of *fool* and *knave*, he has *where* to stand, and he may shake the whole fabric of moral evidence.

Dr



Dr Middleton is so charmed with the notion of detecting a trick in the primitive church at Smyrna, that, after having pleaded for the authority of the reading [*a dove*] at p. 126. he actually pleads for the reality of *the dove itself*, at p. 220. "If," says he, "a dove was really seen to fly out of the wood, which was prepared to consume Polycarp, it might have been conveyed thither, *probably by design*, in order to be let loose at a certain moment; as in the funerals of the Roman emperors, an eagle was always observed to fly out of the funeral pile, *as soon as it began to blaze*, which was supposed to convey the soul of the deceased to heaven; of which a solemn deposition was constantly made upon oath, in order to the deification of those emperors." To prove the noted fact of the eagle, Dr Middleton takes the trouble of quoting Dion Cassius, lib. lvi. and lib. lxxiv.; but to prove *the solemn deposition*  
*constantly*

*constantly made*, he satisfies himself with the single testimony of Justin Martyr. Such an implicit reliance on the testimony of one primitive father, was hardly to be expected from Dr Middleton; and *this* the rather, because if we understand the word *ὑμάρτα* of one who *avers*, and not of one *who makes a solemn deposition*, the testimony of Justin Martyr is nothing to the purpose. And indeed there seems to have been no great occasion for putting any of the spectators upon oath, in order to prove what every spectator might have seen, "that an eagle ascended from the funeral pile."

But waving this, it will occur to the reader, that a more extraordinary hypothesis than that of Dr Middleton was never devised. The design of letting loose the dove at a certain moment must have been planned and executed by the Christians; for neither the Heathens nor the Jews would have contrived

arrived this notable feat in honour of Polycarp.

From the manner in which Dr Middleton has adjusted the circumstances of the story, one would be led to suppose, that the Christians, being masters of the theatre, had full liberty of employing any pageant which might best conduce to the reputation of the martyr. It seems, that they took the hint from *the eagle* which flew out of the funeral pile of the Roman emperors, *as soon as it began to blaze*; but that, improving on this hint, they made *their dove* issue out when the fire was well nigh extinguished. How those sagacious artists contrived to keep the dove in the midst of the flames until the conclusion of the spectacle, must remain forever among the arcana of natural philosophy.

Enough has been said to prove, that the Christians of Smyrna have no title to the honour of that very ingenious contrivance ascribed to them by Dr Middleton.



Since, then, the circumstances of the case exclude all possibility of *knavery*, we are furnished with an additional argument for proving, that the *dove* was not originally in the epistle from the church of Smyrna.

If the Christians imagined, that they saw a dove issue from the body of Polycarp, they must have been visionaries, and of a temper exceedingly credulous. Now, if that had been their disposition at the time of the martyrdom of Polycarp, they would have related this extraordinary appearance with all the circumstances in which their credulity had clothed it. For example, the dove would have been whiter than snow; it would have fluttered round the head of the martyr, and it would have suddenly vanished from the sight of the spectators. *This*, it will be admitted, is agreeable to the feelings and operations of human nature: nevertheless the *dove* is carelessly mentioned, as a  
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common

common and uninteresting event, not as a most extraordinary phenomenon.

Le Moine, *Proleg. ad varia sacra*, thinks, that *περιτρεπὰ* is an erroneous reading; and yet he adds an observation, which, if just, would go far to prove, that it was the ancient reading. His words are: “ Si tamen  
 “ codicibus recentioribus standum sit, et  
 “ vox *περιτρεπὰ* servanda, et martyrium Po-  
 “ lycarpi isto novo prodigio ornandum et  
 “ decorandum, *nullus dubito*, quin Lucianus  
 “ hoc ridere voluerit fictione vulturis subi-  
 “ to exeuntis ex rogo Peregrini, quasi vo-  
 “ luisset innuere miraculum idem fuisse, et  
 “ in morte Polycarpi, et in morte Peregrini  
 “ fui, eâdem levitate ac vanitate ista disse-  
 “ minari, fatuæ plebeculæ *δεισidasμωστρεπας*  
 “ prandia ac irritamenta, nec Christianos  
 “ difficiliiores debere se præstare, quoad  
 “ vulturem unius probandum et laudandum,  
 “ quam ad alterius columbam memoran-  
 “ dam et deprædicandam.” And again:  
 “ Ex

" Ex rogo Peregrini vulturem evolasse fin-  
 " xit, quem postea se vidisse per omnia sa-  
 " cra jurârant fabularum superstitiosi, inep-  
 " ti, ac stolidi belluones. Cum vultur iste  
 " fuerit tantum ludentis cerebri Luciani i-  
 " maginarium figmentum, unde dicit Lu-  
 " cianus *αἰνῶν αὐτοῦ*, ego ipse emisi vultu-  
 " rem istum, in nido jocantis cerebri mei  
 " illum exclusi, fovi, ac emisi. Soli mihi tri-  
 " buendum est, quod fit, quod volat, &c.  
 " *quod ideo forsan a Luciano fictum quia co-*  
 " *lumba in rogo Polycarpi apparuisse legeba-*  
 " *tur.*"

With the Latinity of this passage I have  
 no concern: but on the conjecture itself I  
 must be permitted to make a few observa-  
 tions.

Every one knows the story of Peregrinus,  
 or Proteus, the Cynic philosopher, who threw  
 himself into a burning pile at the conclusion  
 of the Olympic games. The learned are a-  
 greed, that this happened either in the year



165 or 169 of the vulgar æra. See *Lucianus, Reitzii*, t. iii. p. 556.

It is plain from the narrative of *Lucian*, that he related the event immediately after it happened.

The learned are not agreed as to the time of the martyrdom of *Polycarp*. It is placed by different authors in 147, 163, 167, and 169.

If *Peregrinus* died in 165, *Lucian*, who drew up his narrative immediately after that event, could not have alluded to the martyrdom of *Polycarp*, supposing it to have happened in 167 or 169.

But as the time of the martyrdom of *Polycarp* is uncertain, and, as the time of the death of *Peregrinus* is not absolutely fixed, there can be no reliance on criticisms of this nature. Let the martyrdom of *Polycarp* be placed as early, and the suicide of *Peregrinus* as late as historical probability will allow;

low; the one in the year 147, the other in the year 169.

Thus the greatest interval that could possibly have happened between the two events, is no more than twenty-two years: it therefore follows, that if Lucian alluded to the story of the *dove*, that story was known in the world, and had become a subject of conversation among the Heathens within twenty-two years after the event.

If such was the case, it is vain to mention the credulity of later ages, and the readings of recent manuscripts, [recentiores codices]; for the existence of the dove, according to common report, will be very ancient, and, in a manner, coeval with the martyrdom of Polycarp.

If the word *περικτερά* was in the Christian narrative so early as the time at which Lucian wrote his treatise concerning the death of Peregrinus, it may be concluded, that it was originally *there*, and no room will be left

left for an emendation of the text, which Le Moine has proposed, on the supposition, that *πεπισησά* was not in the original narrative.

But the truth is, that Lucian, when he wrote of Peregrinus, had not the martyrdom of Polycarp in view. Le Moine supposes, that he *hinted* at the fabled miracle of the *dove*. [*quasi voluisset innuere.*] But what occasion was there for *hinting* his disbelief of a circumstance attending the death of one of the followers of Christ, in a treatise where he openly and avowedly professes his contempt of Christianity and its author? In ridiculing the Cynics, he may be supposed to have *hinted* at the Stoics, who were at that period the fashionable sect; but there was no reason for his being so cautious with regard to the despised and hated Christians. Accordingly we see, that in this treatise he aims his bolt at the doctrine of benevolence, which Christ taught; and which his disciples,



ples, by the confession of their enemies themselves, universally obeyed. The buffoon who could make a mock at Christian charity, would not have spared the dove of the church of Smyrna.

It may be demanded, wherefore did Lucian imagine this fiction of the vulture? Gesner seems to have given a satisfactory answer to the question. "As a living Cynic was a dog, the soul of a Cynic might be aptly represented under the emblem of a vulture. [*vultur canis inter aves ut inter homines Cynici.*" Vid. *Lucianus Reitzii*, t. iii. p. 360.]

Had Lucian known any thing of the narrative of the church of Smyrna, and had he meant to draw a comparison between the death of Polycarp and that of Peregrinus, he would probably have copied the circumstances which are reported to have attended the death of Polycarp, instead of saying, in his fictitious narrative, that there was an earthquake, and that Peregrinus cried with

a loud voice, and in theatrical language, "I have quitted the earth, and I go to heaven."

Thus we may conjecture, that Lucian, so far from meaning to allude to the martyrdom of Polycarp, did not so much as know the circumstances of that event.

II. Holding then *the dove* to have been an interpolation, the next question is, By what means did it come into the text?

As to this, two separate hypotheses have been maintained: 1. It is said to have come there by *accident*; 2. It is said to have been *designedly* placed in the text.

1. As to the first hypothesis, that the word *περίσσεια* came into the text by accident, there is a difference of opinion.

Mr Whiston, in one of his rambling publications, says, "If we take Mr Allan's commendation of *περίσσεια* for *περίσσευα*, and supply what will then be wanting, the reading will be, *there came out a large quantity*"

“ quantify of water, and abundance of blood,  
 “ as was the case of the piercing our Sa-  
 “ viour’s side upon the cross; to which  
 “ reading I incline.” *Account of the exact  
 time when miraculous gifts ceased in the church,*  
 p. 40.

The reading here proposed is, ἐξῆλθε πε-  
 ρισσεῖα ὕδατος ἔκ πληθὸς αἵματος.

Dr Jortin, *Remarks on ecclesiastical history*,  
 t. ii. p. 125. justly observes, “ That this is  
 “ too bold, and passes the bounds of sober  
 “ criticism.”

Indeed it is extravagant; for it removes  
 one difficulty by a desperate conjecture, and  
 introduces another difficulty, no less embar-  
 rassing, in its stead. In the body of a man  
 there may be πληθὸς αἵματος, “ abundance  
 “ of blood;” but in the same body there  
 cannot be περισσεῖα ὕδατος, “ a large quan-  
 “ tity of water.” Mr Whiston did not read  
 in our scriptures, “ That a large quantity of  
 “ water issued out at the piercing of our

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“ Saviour’s



“ Saviour’s side.” *The large quantity of water, would have been a circumstance just as wonderful as the dove.*

Another conjecture as to this passage has been more generally received. It is thus stated by Dr Brooke, Examination of Dr Middleton’s free inquiry, p. 98. “ If,” says he, “ the text has been corrupted, the most “ probable and the most ingenious emenda- “ tion is, I think, that of Le Moine, *Pro- “ leg. ad varia sacra*, who reads ἐπ’ ἀριστερά “ πλῆθος αἵματος, in manuscripts where the “ words stand close together undistinguished “ by any accents or interpunctiōns, as is the “ case in many manuscripts, it was easy for “ a careless and ignorant transcriber to write “ ἐξ ἡλθῆ instead of ἐξ ἡλθ’ and then, finding “ the next word written περιστέρα, it was “ natural to insert afterwards the particle “ καί, as thinking it wanting to make out “ the sense and construction of the passage; “ and, from one such transcript, it is easy to imagine

“ imagine, how this text might spread itself  
 “ through the rest of the copies, and ap-  
 “ pear in those manuscripts, out of which  
 “ Usher and Bolland made their editions,  
 “ and which gave authority to the present  
 “ reading.”

An error such as Dr Brooke mentions, may, no doubt, have been committed by the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers. We read ancient authors as they have been corrected by the critical skill of publishers; but were we to read them as they are in many MSS. we should meet with thousands of examples, where greater changes have been made by impertinent transcribers.

Dr Jortin, who had a more musical ear than Dr Brooke, reads, ἐξῆλθεν instead of ἐξῆλθ' to avoid poetic numbers. He also proposes ἐπ'ἀριστερά as preferable to ἐπ'ἀριστερᾷ. *Remarks on ecclesiastical history*, t. ii. p. 124.

Such niceties, however, are of little mo-

ment. The reading proposed by Le Moine is still the basis of the whole.

That reading has been adopted by Wake, Smith, Brooke, and many other learned men. Nevertheless there may remain some doubts of its propriety.

That "abundance of blood issued from the *left* side of Polycarp," is a circumstance insignificant in itself, and which could scarcely have fallen under the observation of the Christian spectators.

The other hypothesis seems more probable; that the dove was inserted by some impertinent copist who wished to embellish the narrative.

The appearance of a dove at the martyrdom of saints, is not without example in legendary story.

Prudentius speaks of the soul of the virgin Eulalia, which issued from her mouth in the form of a *white dove*.

"Emicat



“ Emicat inde columba recens

“ Martyris os nive candidior

“ Visa relinquere et astra sequi.

“ Spiritus hic erat Eulaliæ

“ Lacteolus, celer, innocuus.”

*Hymnus in laudem Eulalia virginis,*

*J. 160. Sc.*

A circumstance of this nature having found place in the account of the passion of one saint, it is not strange that something similar should be related of another. This is to transcribe a fable, with the variation of names; than which nothing is more common among biographers of that class.

Dr Jortin mentions the story of Eulalia, and adds, “ This hath made some suspect, “ that the story of Polycarp’s dove might “ be somewhat more ancient than the time “ of Prudentius, and gave occasion to the “ fiction about Eulalia’s dove.” One would be induced to draw a quite opposite inference,

ence, and to conclude, that the story of Eulalia's dove gave occasion to the fiction of Polycarp's dove; because Christians were more credulous in the days of Prudentius than in the second century.

It seems no improbable conjecture, that Pionius, who drew up the Greek legend of Polycarp, was the person who interpolated *the dove* in the narrative of the church of Smyrna. He who composed that legend, would not have been deterred by scruples of conscience from making an interpolation. It is remarkable, that the ancient Latin version of the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, is made from the copy written by Pionius. We thus trace the story of *the dove* to him; and we have no evidence that it existed before his time.

The certificate which Pionius has subjoined to his copy rather serves to increase than diminish the suspicion, that we owe the dove to him; and that he might have said of it,

as Lucian said of the vulture, "It was myself that let it fly."

His certificate runs thus: "I Pionius transcribed it [the epistle] from the copy formerly written, having sought it out by the revelation of Polycarp, who discovered it to me, as I shall declare in the sequel. I have gathered these things together when they were already well nigh consumed by time, that the Lord Jesus Christ might also gather me with his elect; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

That the epistle from the church of Smyrna should have been in danger of perishing is most improbable; and that it should have been revealed by Polycarp to the fabulist Pionius, is absurd. *Here* then there is evidence either of fanaticism or knavery, perhaps of both; and to a person of such a character we may, with propriety, ascribe the interpolation of the word *περιερεπᾶ*.

"So



\* So as to *quench* the fire." It is hardly necessary to observe, that *πλῆθος*, here rendered *abundance*, implies an undetermined quantity; and that *καταβίβαι*, here rendered to *quench*, may signify to *abate* or *damp*. It may not be improper to add, that as the executioner, before he could stab Polycarp, must have thrown down the pile, it is probable, that the fire did not *blaze* at the time here spoken of, as some critics have imagined.

" That they might have fellowship with his body." The Greeks had an early veneration for the bodies of departed saints; to what excesses this veneration afterwards arose is well known.

Pag. 21.

" Left, leaving him that was crucified, they begin to worship this man." Le Clerc supposes, that this was an absurd observation; and he asks, What concern it was

was of the Heathens and Jews, whether the Christians worshipped Jesus or Polycarp.

“ Quid hoc intererat Judæorum vel Ethnorum ? sed improbi homines, cum nullam malignitati rationis speciem prætexere possent, non falsam tantum, sed et absurdam commenti sunt.” *Historia Eccles.*

p. 729. Le Clerc read and wrote with too much precipitation : had he allowed himself leisure to reflect, he would have perceived, that the observation made by the Heathens and the Jews was not absurd. If we suppose, that they held Christianity to be *true*, the observation is indeed absurd ; but we must remember, that they held Christianity to be the *vision of superstition and enthusiasm* ; for they were not so refined in their apprehensions as to believe it *the fiction of knaves*. Now, while they remained in this belief, their observation was just, and deduced from the nature of man. The affections of an enthusiast are inconstant and desultory, and

the objects of the veneration of the superstitious vary from age to age. Thus, for example, St John of Beverley, and St Thomas à Becket, became successively the tutelary saints of England, while evangelists and apostles were no longer had in remembrance. Nay more, on the continent, St Anthony, St Francis, and St Bridget, were succeeded, or at least rivalled, by other St Anthonys Francises, and Bridgets.

“ Who also kept watch on us when we  
 “ were about to convey away the body from  
 “ the pile.” By comparing this passage with  
 what follows, of “ the Centurion’s percei-  
 “ ving the opposition of the Jews,” &c. it  
 appears, that the Christians had privately  
 bargained with the Centurion for the body  
 of Polycarp; and that Le Clerc’s notion,  
 of the proconsul having rejected the petition  
 for withholding the body, is altogether er-  
 roneous.



Pag. 22.

“ For the salvation of all that are saved  
 “ throughout the world.” In the epistle,  
 as published by Archbishop Usher, there is  
 added, [the just for the unjust] ; which some  
 consider to be an interpolation. The words  
 are at least redundant in this place.

“ More excellent.” *δοξωτέρα*. Which  
 means, “ That no gold would stand the test  
 “ so well.” But that expression would have  
 sounded uncouth in English.

“ We placed them where it was fitting.”  
 The Christians of Smyrna cautiously avoided  
 any mention of the place in which they had  
 laid the bones of Polycarp, lest their ene-  
 mies should deprive them of what they es-  
 teemed a most precious deposit.

Pag. 23.

“ There we purpose, whenever God shall  
 “ grant opportunity,” &c. Archbishop  
 Wake has misunderstood the sense of this  
 passage. He translates it, “ Where being

U 2

“ gathered

“ gathered together, as we have opportu-  
 “ nity, with joy and gladness, the Lord shall  
 “ grant unto us to celebrate,” &c.

“ An eminent teacher he was, and more-  
 “ over a chosen martyr.” Archbishop  
 Wake, by joining this with the preceding  
 sentence, has made the Christians of Smyr-  
 na say, that “ Polycarp was spoken of by  
 “ the very Gentiles themselves in every  
 “ place, as having been not only an emi-  
 “ nent teacher, but also a glorious martyr.”  
 Surely the Heathens did not speak of Poly-  
 carp as having been *a glorious martyr*.

Pag. 24.

“ Free gift.” δωρεᾶ. It is not very ob-  
 vious, why Archbishop Wake should have  
 translated δωρεᾶ by the word *help*.

Pag. 25.

“ Now the martyrdom of the blessed Po-  
 “ lycarp happened on the second day of the  
 “ month Xanthicus, before the seventh of  
 “ the

“ the kalends of March, at the season of  
 “ the Great Sabbath, at the eighth hour.”

Instead of “ kalends of *March*,” the epistle published by Usher has “ kalends of  
 “ *May*.” This is an error of the transcriber ; for the month Xanthicus began on the  
 22d of February, and consequently the 2d  
 of that month could not be the seventh of  
 the kalends of May, [i. e. 27th of April].  
 Although there is here a very minute account of the month, day, and hour, on  
 which Polycarp suffered martyrdom, it is  
 exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to  
 make all the parts of the account to be consistent. In modern language, the epistle  
 from the Christians of Smyrna says, that  
 Polycarp suffered martyrdom at two o'clock  
 in the afternoon of Saturday, the 23d of  
 February. But *here* lies the difficulty, that  
 it is added, “ at the season of *the Great Sabbath*.” Now, if *the Great Sabbath* meant,  
 as many learned men imagine, the *Saturday*

*in*



*in Passion week, that Saturday could never, in the nature of things, be the 23d of February. If by the Great Sabbath some other festival was meant, it will be no less difficult to ascertain what festival it was which passed under that name.*

“ Our Lord Jesus Christ reigning for ever-  
 “ more.” Had the writers of this epistle mentioned either the names of the consuls of the year, or the name of the emperor then reigning, that perplexed question in chronology, concerning the time of Polycarp’s martyrdom, would have been of easy solution; whereas, by affectedly blending a spiritual computation with civil dates, they have left room for endless controversies. I have been favoured with some observations by a learned person, which are here given in his own words. “ I question whether  
 “ the genuine epistle did not end with the  
 “ words, *his whole house*. The dates, &c.  
 “ were perhaps added by Pionius; and thus  
 “ many

" many difficulties will be removed ; parti-  
 " cularly we may allow Polycarp to have  
 " been martyred in Passion week. It is not  
 " likely that the church of Smyrna, in wri-  
 " ting to the other churches of Asia, should  
 " tell them the names of the asiarch and  
 " proconsul ; and I think they had too  
 " much sense to mention the reign of Jesus  
 " Christ on such an occasion."

Pag. 27.

" The servants of Christ, inhabiting Vienne  
 " and Lyons of Gaul." The two cities were  
 under the government of one President, and  
 the Christians in both had undergone like  
 persecution : it was natural, therefore, for  
 them to join in this epistle to the brethren  
 in Asia.

Valesius puts the question, " Why was  
 " Vienne placed before Lyons ?" He did  
 not recollect, that one of the places must  
 necessarily have been mentioned before the  
 other ; and consequently, that a like ques-  
 tion

tion might have been put, had the name of *Lyons* stood before *Vienne*. It is probable, that the words were arranged as best suited the ear of the writer. The solutions given by Valeſius may ſerve to ſhew, that ſuch minute diſquiſitions are in their nature unprofitable. He produces two: 1. That the Chriſtians of Lyons being the writers of the epiſtle, placed *Vienne* firſt, through civility [*honoris cauſa*]. 2. That *Vienne* was the moſt ancient colony. And thus, his firſt reaſon ſuppoſes *favour*, and his ſecond, *right*.

“ Throughout *Aſia* and *Phrygia*.” It has been asked, “ Why did the Chriſtians “ of Gaul write in Greek to their brethren “ in *Aſia*?” The reaſons are obvious. Greek was the language of buſineſs in the intercourſe between the weſt and the eaſtern provinces, and it was the common language of *Aſia*. Beſides, there is good ground to believe, that the Chriſtians of Lyons and *Vienne* were generally of Greek original;



for most of the persons who eminently suffered during the persecution, appear by their names to have been Greeks, as Pothinus, Attalus, Alcibiades, and Biblias. Vetrius has a Greek appellation, *Epagathus*. Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum*, l. i. c. 49. has preserved the names of many of the martyrs, which are manifestly Greek, as Macarius, Philominus, Rhodone, Arescius, Photinus, not the bishop, Zotimus, Zoticus, &c.

“Rage of the Heathen,” or “of the nations.” This alludes to Psal. ii. 1. which shews in what sense the Christians of Gaül, in the second century, understood that psalm.

Pag. 28.

“Preluding already to that his coming.” I was uncertain as to the true meaning of this passage, until a learned and eminent person explained it, and added this note. “Alluding, as I suppose to 2 Thess. ii. 9.

“ὁ ἰσχυρὸς ἡ παρουσία καὶ ἐνέργεια τοῦ Σατανᾶ

X

“ἐν

“ ἐν παντὶ δυνάμει. The primitive Christians  
 “ looked with terror towards those evils,  
 “ which the *Adversary*, the *Antichrist*, or  
 “ by what other name they signified that  
 “ *mystery of iniquity*, which began to shew  
 “ itself early, should one day bring upon  
 “ them.”

“ From houses.” The sense is, that the  
 Christians were prevented from having any  
 intercourse with their neighbours; not, that  
 they were not permitted to remain in their  
 own habitations.

“ Markets and courts of justice.” The  
 word in the original is ἀγορὰ, which may  
 comprehend both markets and courts of ju-  
 stice. The sense is, “ places of public and  
 “ necessary resort.”

Pag. 29.

“ Held in durance.” Valesius remarks,  
 that hitherto the epistle only speaks of the  
 contumelies of the multitude, and therefore,  
 that this does not mean, that the Christians  
 were

were imprisoned, but that having met with insults when they appeared in public, they confined themselves at home. Nevertheless *συγκλείσεις* is a strong word to be used, were nothing more understood than what Valerius supposes. The enthusiastic fury of the Heathens might possibly have incited them to imprison the Christians without any interposition of civil authority.

“Magistrates of the city,” or the decemvirs. *ἐξουσίαι* properly means the superior judges, who had the *jus gladii*, or the power of inflicting capital punishments; but it is also used, in a less accurate sense, for inferior magistrates.

Pag. 30.

“Governor.” *ἡγεμών*, or *præses*. Valerius understands this person to have been the *legatus Cæsaris*; and he quotes an inscription in Gruter, where mention is made of “*Legatus Imp. Nervæ Trajani Cæsaris Aug. Provincia Lugdunensis.*” He adds a re-



markable passage from Spartian in *Severo*.  
 “ Deinde *provinciam Lugdunensem* accepit.”  
 And he conjectures, that as *Severus*, afterwards emperor, was *legatus Provincia Lugdunensis* in the reign of *M. Antoninus*, he was the *governor* of whom the epistle speaks. The conjecture is ingenious, and the behaviour of this governor accords well to the harsh and unfeeling temper of *Severus*; concerning whom it was vulgarly said, “ *Verè Severus, verè Pertinax.*” But there is too much reason to believe, that the same character would have been equally applicable to many governors of provinces in that age.

“ *Vettius Epagathus.*” All that we know with certainty of this good man is from the epistle of the Christians of Gaul. *Gregory*, of *Tours*, *Hist.* l. i. c. 29. mentions a “ *Leucadius primus Galliarum Senator, qui de stirpe Vettii Epagathi fuit,*” in the reign of the Emperor *Decius*. This passage  
 in.

in Gregory of Tours, says Valeſius, plainly indicates, that Vettius Epagathus was a perſon of the firſt nobility in Lyons: and indeed, adds he, the ſame thing is evident from the epiſtle itſelf, where it is ſaid, καὶ γὰρ ἦν ἐπίσημος. But ἐπίσημος may imply, “distinguished for his virtues and uſefulneſs,” as well as “distinguished on account of his noble birth.”

Pag. 31.

“Obtained the appellation of *the Advocate of the Chriſtians.*” In the original it is παράκλητος Χριſτιανῶν χρηματιſάας. There are various opinions as to the interpretation of this paſſage. Rufinus underſtands it to ſignify, that the governor gave that title to Vettius Epagathus, [*Advocatus quidem Chriſtianorum, judicis Elogio, appellatus*]; and Valeſius is of the ſame opinion. Others underſtand it to ſignify, that this title was generally beſtowed on him by the Chriſtians. It is not improbable, that the Governor, in a taunting ſtyle,

style, might have called him *the advocate of the Christians*, and that the Christians themselves might have perpetuated the appellation, with the view of doing honour to the brave zeal of Vettius Epagathus. There is reason to believe, that the very name of *Christian* was a name *imposed* at first, and not *assumed*. See Acts xi. 26. The name occurs but once in the writings of the apostles: 1 Peter iv. 16. ; and even *there* it may be justly understood of a name which the followers of Jesus received from the Heathens or the Jews, and not of a name which they arrogated to themselves.

Pag. 32.

“Following the Lamb where-ever he go-  
“eth.” This obviously alludes to Rev.  
xiv. 4.

“Ready prepared.” *διεπείροιστο*. They who entered the lists at the Gymnastic shews of the ancients were examined before they obtained permission to contend. Inquiry in a  
special



Special manner was made, whether they were free-born, and whether they were of the age required in combatants. The persons admitted were said, *εὐκρίνεσθαι*, and the persons rejected, *ἐκρίνεσθαι*. In this epistle there are many allusions to the Gymnastic exercises; but it is difficult to render them into English with precision and dignity; for the words *racers*, *boxers*, and *prize-fighters*, convey to a modern ear the notion of something mean and venal.

“Fell off.” *ἐξέπεσαν*. Valesius observes, that in one MS. the word is *ἐξέρπονται*. He seems to think, that, through the officiousness of transcribers, that word was exchanged for one in more general use; and he interprets *ἐξέρπονται* in a passive sense for *ἐξημβλώθησαν*, that is, *ἐν τρωμα ἐγένοντο*. “They were made abortions.” A like metaphor occurs hereafter in this epistle.

Pag. 33.

“The most excellent persons.” From the whole

whole strain of this epistle it is evident, that the Christians in Lyons and Vienne were indiscriminately persecuted; and that no distinction was made by their enemies between bond or free, ecclesiastics or laymen. Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. vi. c. 28. says, that Maximin, the Thracian, “ordained, that  
 “only the presidents of the churches should  
 “be put to death.” [τὸς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἄρχοντας μόνους — ἀναιρεῖσθαι προεταίη.] It is remarkable, that Sulpicius Severus does not take this persecution of the clergy into his account of the general persecutions. See b. ii. ch. 32.

“Both churches.” This implies, according to Valesius, that there was a Bishop at Vienne as well as at Lyons; because, in the language of Christian antiquity, *ecclesia* is never used unless for a *mother* or *cathedral church*. This observation is too general. *Ecclesia* originally implied any assembly or congregation of Christian believers; and  
 therefore

therefore must have been used only in a secondary sense for a *see*.

Pag. 34.

“ Murder of young children.” In the original, “ Banquets of Thyestes.” Alluding to a well-known incident in the ancient history of Greece. That the primitive Christians were charged as guilty of the murder of young children in their religious rites, is certain; but it is difficult to discover the origin of that charge. There was published at London, in 1727, a treatise, intitled, *The calumnies upon the primitive Christians accounted for*. By Robert Turner, M. A. Vicar of St Peter’s, in Colchester. 8vo. pp. 228. The industrious author observes, that the primitive Christians were popularly accused of Atheism, of eating young children, and of incest. “ τρία ἐπιφημίζουσιν ἡμῶν ἐκκλη-  
 “ ματα, Αθεότητα, Θυέσσεια δείπνα, Οιδόπο-  
 “ δεις μίξεις.” *Athenagoras*, Legat. p. 4. These, says Mr Turner, are, “ the three o-

Y

“ riginal



“ original calumnies,” almost coeval with Christianity itself.

As to the *first* accusation, the primitive Christians avowed themselves to be *Atheists* in the Heathen sense of the word; and indeed it appears, from various passages in Tertullian and Minucius Felix, that they sometimes carried their contempt of the Pagan divinities beyond the bounds of evangelical prudence.

The Emperor Julian calls *Christianity* “ τὴν Ἀθεότητα,” *the Atheism*, by way of eminence. Although no very candid adversary, he could not mean to say, that the Christians denied a first cause, and a superintending Providence. In his 51st epistle, to the people of Alexandria, he complains, that they preferred Jesus to *the Great Sun*, whom he is pleased to call, “ τὸ ζῶν, ἁγαλμα, καὶ ἐμψυχον, καὶ ἔνταν,” i. e. “ the living, animated, and intelligent representation of the divinity.” This explains  
in

in what sense it was, that Julian gave the appellation of *Atheists* to the professors of the Christian faith, and I suppose that he spoke the sentiments of the other Heathens.

With respect to the *second* accusation, "the eating of young children," the particulars of it are to be found in Minucius Felix. "Concerning the initiation of novices," says he, "an abominable fable is universally reported. An infant covered over with paste is served up to the novice, and the novice, ignorant of the disguise, and suspecting nothing, is excited to prick holes in the paste; and thus, by imperceptible wounds, is the infant slain. Then the persons present eagerly lap his blood, and tear his limbs to pieces. By this sacrifice they are covenanted together, and by such conscious wickedness do they pledge themselves to mutual secrecy. These holy rites are more flagitious than ought that bears the appellation

“tion of sacrilege.” [Jam de initiandis tirunculis, fabula tam detestanda, quam nota est: Infans farre contactus, ut decipiat incantos, apponitur ei qui sacris imbuitur: is infans a tirunculo, farris superficie quasi ad innoxios ictus provocato, cæcis occultisque vulneribus occiditur: hujus, pro nefas! fictienter sanguinem lambunt, hujus certatim membra dispertiunt: Hac foederantur hostiâ, hac conscientia sceleris ad silentium mutuum pignerantur. Hæc sacra sacrilegiis omnibus tetriora.]

I will not stay to prove, that such abominable rites could never have been celebrated by the true disciples of Jesus. The report of their having been celebrated is supposed to have arisen from one or other of the causes following. 1. The general enmity of the Heathens against the professors of Christianity. 2. The flagitious practices of which certain fanatics, in the early times of the Christian church, are said to have been guilty.



guilty. 3. A mistaken apprehension of some tenets and practices peculiar to the Christian religion.

As to the *first*, "The general enmity of the Heathens against the professors of Christianity," it must be acknowledged, that prejudice and credulity have given rise to many absurd calumnies: of this there are but too frequent examples in the history of mankind. Men have a strange propensity in raising and propagating reports, however false, which may serve to defame and render odious the characters of their enemies. Even a Chrysostom could say of the Emperor Julian, "τὴν αὖτις λέγεται τὰς τῶν παιδῶν σφαγὰς." *Adv. Gentes*, t. ii. p. 560. The prejudices of the Heathens against the disciples of Jesus were violent, and their credulity excessive. Hence it is not improbable, that they might have ascribed to the Christians whatsoever was supposed to be perpetrated

perpetrated amongst the most savage nations, or by the most flagitious of men.

To sacrifice young children was one of the solemn rites of Paganism. But this was not the precise charge against the primitive Christians; for they were accused, not only of slaying a young child, but of drinking his blood, and eating his flesh.

Yet this also is not without example in Heathen story. It is said, that Catiline and his accomplices murdered a boy, and joined in eating his entrails, when they bound themselves by a tremendous oath of secrecy. *Plutarch*, t. i. p. 866. edit. Paris 1624.; *Dion Cassius*, l. xxxvii. p. 43. edit. Leunclavii.

I mean not to affirm, that Catiline and his accomplices ever perpetrated a crime so savage. All that is necessary for my purpose is, that the *Thyestæan banquet* of Catiline was popularly reported, and popularly believed.

Antiochus

Antiochus Epiphanes discovered a Greek, in the temple of Jerusalem, whom the Jews were fattening, that they might feed on him at an annual sacrifice instituted in execration of the Grecian name. *Josephus contra Apionem*, l. 2.

This story is absurd; and yet it gained credit with the vulgar; was received into Apion's book, and was thought worthy of a formal confutation by Josephus. I mention it, not as if I believed it any more than the banquet of Catiline, but merely to shew, that the charge of murdering a child, and then eating it, was no new and unknown charge; and that if prejudice reported, and credulity believed this as to the Jews and Catiline, the like prejudice might report, and the like credulity might believe it, as to the primitive Christians.

What has been said, in some measure accounts for that ancient calumny against the Christians, that in their religious rites they murdered



murdered an infant, drank his blood, and eat his flesh; but it may be proper to inquire into the particular cause and origin of this calumny.

2. Some writers ascribe it to the flagitious practices of which certain fanatics, in the early times of the Christian church, are said to have been guilty.

We are informed by ecclesiastical historians, that in those days there arose certain profligate fanatics, who taught and practised the most horrible enormities. Of this number was Carpocras or Carpocrates, head of a sect of the Gnostics. *Irenæus*, l. i. c. 24.; *Epiphanius*, Adv. Hæres. 27.; and *Eusebius*, Hist. Eccles. l. iv. c. 7. His tenets, as related by the authors here quoted, are so impious and extravagant, that they would appear incredible, were it not, that no limits can be fixed to the caprices of weak understandings, or to the profligacy of corrupted hearts. To Carpocrates and his followers it

is, that Eusebius ascribes the evil reports which went abroad against the followers of Jesus, and particularly that report, that the Christians used “*ἀνθρώπων τροφῆς*.” This might seem, at first view, to allude to that execrable food, the flesh of young children. I suspect, however, that Eusebius means something else, which the inquisitive reader may discover on a perusal of the works of Epiphanius, but which I must be excused from explaining.

The ancient fathers, in the most direct terms, accused the Montanists, another sect of fanatics, of the crime of murdering and eating young children; and relate the story with the very same circumstances which the Heathens, according to Minucius Felix, related of the Christians. “It is reported of the Montanists,” says Augustin, *de Hæres* 26. “that they were wont to take a child of a year old, and, by small punctures all over its body, to extract the blood from it;”

" that they mixed the blood with flour,  
 " and of this mixture made their Eucharis-  
 " tical bread. It is added, that if the child  
 " died, he was esteemed a martyr; and if  
 " he survived, a High Priest." [Nam de  
 infantis anniculi sanguine, quem de toto e-  
 jus corpore minutis punctio-  
 num vulneribus extorquent, quasi Eucharistiam suam conficere perhibentur, miscentes eum farina, panemque inde facientes. Qui puer, si mortuus fuerit, habetur apud eos pro martyre; si autem vixerit, pro Magno Sacerdote.]

Cyril's testimony is still more express.  
 " Montanus," says he, " took possession of  
 " Pepuza, a village in Phrygia, to which  
 " he gave the fictitious name of Jerusalem;  
 " and he butchered miserable young chil-  
 " dren, and minced them down for an un-  
 " hallowed repast, on account of what, a-  
 " mong his disciples, is termed *the Mys-  
 " teries.*" v. *Catech.* xvi. § 4.

This strange narrative was delivered to  
 an



an audience partly consisting of females, as Cyril himself observes. He speaks of ἀθλιώτατα παῖδια γυναικῶν μικρά, which is literally, "the most wretched little children of women." The expression is uncouth; perhaps ἀθλιωτάτων ought to be read, and then the sense will be as if he had said, "the tender offspring of most unhappy mothers." Which was a mode of rhetoric well adapted to the passions of his female auditors.

Cyril adds, that in the times of persecution the Christians were charged as guilty of those practices; because the Heathens did not distinguish between the real followers of Jesus and the Montanists, who falsely assumed the name of Christians.

All this is specious; and yet Mr Turner proposes a very cogent objection to the hypothesis of Eusebius and Cyril. He observes, that Justin Martyr speaks of the like accusation having been brought against the

Christians before Carpocrates or the Montanists were known.

3. This leads to the *third* cause of the calumny; namely, A mistaken apprehension of some tenets and practices peculiar to the Christian religion.

Mr Turner produces a passage from Irenæus, edit. Benedict. p. 343. which may serve, in some measure, to shew from what source this calumny against the Christians arose. Irenæus says, that the Heathens seized the slaves of the Christians, and compelled them to bear testimony against their masters. These slaves reported, that they had heard it said by their masters, that the holy communion was the blood and body of Christ. They supposed, says Irenæus, that it was *in reality* blood and flesh, [*τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὄντος σώματος καὶ σαρκὸς ὄντος*], and their report was rashly credited by the Heathens.

This seems to be a natural account of the reason which induced the Heathens to imagine,

gine, that the Christians drank human blood, and ate human flesh, at the celebration of their religious rites; and it is the more natural, because from the use of bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, a report did arise in the Heathen world, that Bacchus and Ceres were the divinities whom the Christians secretly worshipped. See Augustin *contra Faustum*. xx. 13.

The only other question remaining under this head is, Why the Heathens should have supposed, that the Christians, in their sacred ceremonies, drank the blood of *a child*, and ate his flesh? This is ingeniously ascribed by Mr Turner to a passage in John, vi. 53. "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." The observations, says Mr Turner, p. 75. which an ignorant Heathen would have made from this passage,



passage, are: 1. That *the Son of Man* was some person different from *that* Jesus who uttered the words. 2. That as every man is the son of some other man, the expression *Son of Man* would have been a foolish circumlocution, if it meant *any man*; and therefore, that it must have signified *the male child of a man*. 3. That the words were spoken in a literal sense. And, 4. As to eat and drink in this manner was made the condition of life, or happiness, it might be concluded, that it was performed by way of a sacred or initiatory rite among the Christians; and the result of the whole would be, “ That Jesus, under pain of his highest displeasure, commanded his followers, who religiously obeyed all his commands, to kill a male child or infant, and to eat of his flesh, and drink of his blood. And this was to be done by way of initiation, or to qualify men for the enjoyment of that happiness, which Jesus promised to  
“ all

“all those that were his true disciples. This  
 “is exactly the substance of the second ca-  
 “lunmy upon the primitive Christians.” I  
 have given the result of Mr. Turner’s deduc-  
 tion in his own words.

“Incest.” Literally, “The incestuous  
 “mixtures of Oedipus;” who is reported to  
 have married his own mother. *This* was the  
*third* calumny against the primitive Chri-  
 stians. It is difficult to discover the origin  
 of the opinion that such incestuous alliances  
 took place among them.

Mr. Turner, p. 39. supposes, that it was  
 owing to the name of *sisters*, which the pri-  
 mitive Christians gave to young women,  
 and of *mothers*, which they gave to women  
 advanced in years. But this is hardly satis-  
 factory. Had the Christians been accused  
 of incest in general, the accusation might  
 have been supposed to have arisen from the  
 name of *sister*, which was undoubtedly gi-  
 ven to a *believing wife*. See 1 Cor. ix. 5.  
 where

where Paul says, *μη ἐκ ἔχουεν ἐξουίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν.* But it was a peculiar sort of incest, the unlawful union of parents and children, of which the primitive Christians were accused. There is no reason to believe, that a husband did at any time give the name of *mother* to his wife, however far advanced in years she might be: on the contrary, it is evident, from the authorities which Mr Turner himself quotes, that on wives of that time of life, the appellation of *sister* was peculiarly bestowed. I therefore incline to the conjecture of Dr Whitby, that this calumny may have been derived from a passage in St Paul, 1 Cor. v. 1. *ὅπως ἀκνέσαι ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἧς ἔδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὀνομάζεσθαι ὥςτε γυναῖκα τινα τῷ πατρὶ ἐχειν.* Some of the Heathens might have met with this passage; and, as they were exceedingly inaccurate in their inquiries concerning the Christian system, they might perhaps have inferred from it, that such in-

cest



ceft was generally practifed among the Chriftians, notwithstanding the admonitions of their teachers. In this notion they might have been confirmed by the word *ἅλως*, which the Apoftle uſes; for it is ambiguous, and is ſuſceptible of the ſenſe of *univerſally*.

Pag. 35.

“ Sanctus, a deacon of the church of “ Vienne.” Valeſius underſtands the words to imply, “ Sanctus of Vienne, a deacon.” And he ſeems to wonder, that they ſhould have been underſtood in any other ſenſe. And yet, if Sanctus was not a deacon of the church of Vienne, it would appear, that the clergy of that church eſcaped the fury of the perſecution altogether. This is improbable, eſpecially as a late writer, of eminent reputation, has obſerved, that the religious reſentment of the Heathens was chiefly directed againſt Chriſtian ſlaves and eccleſiaſtics. The office of Sanctus was a circumſtance of more moment, and more connect-

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ed with the rest of the narrative, than the place of his birth; and as the words are ambiguous, it would appear, for the reasons here given, that "Sanctus, a deacon of the church of Vienne," is the preferable interpretation.

Pag. 36.

"Her mistress according to the flesh." Hence we learn, that the Christians of the second century had Christian slaves in their families, and that this was not considered as a thing strange or blameworthy.

The first teachers of Christianity delivered no positive precepts reprobating domestic slavery; and yet to detain persons of both sexes, together with their offspring, in the bondage authorised by the Roman law, seems hardly consistent with the genius of Christianity. Should not then the genius of their religion have induced the primitive Christians to set their slaves at liberty? I think not.

Estimating

Estimating the condition of men in the Roman empire by the standard of our own times, we naturally conclude, that a change from slavery to freedom was always desirable. Indeed, were there at this day any slaves in Britain, they might derive great advantages from manumission. The freed-man, if a labourer, might find employment in the next field; and if bred to household-offices, might hire out his work at any neighbouring town. He would enjoy independence; he would, at the close of each day, be able to call the fruits of his industry *his own*; and he would transmit to his children the noblest of inheritances, industry and independence.

But the state of things was widely different under the Roman Emperors. At that period the number of slaves almost exceeded the bounds of credibility; and by them domestic offices, as well as rural, were generally performed. Manumission bestowed on



the slaves of the Christians of those times, would not have bettered their condition, but, on the contrary, would have exposed them to the alternative of perishing through want, or of seeking subsistence in a new servitude, and under severer masters.

Pag. 37.

“ Some confession of things unseemly.”  
*i. e.* a confession, that things indecent and flagitious were practised among Christians. A learned friend understands the expression thus: “ To hear something improper fall  
 “ from him, such as blasphemy against  
 “ Christ.” But my interpretation seems justified by a fragment of Irenæus, edit. Benedict. p. 343. where the author, after having mentioned, that the slaves accused their Christian masters of drinking human blood, &c. adds, that the Heathens τῆς μάρτυρας Σάγκλον καὶ Βλανδίναν ὁμολογῆσαι διὰ βασάνων ἠναγκαζοι. *i. e.* They strove, by tortures, to  
 compel

compel Sanctus and Blandina to make confession, or acknowledge the charge.

Pag. 39.

“ Beyond all expectation and belief of man his body unbent itself.” The writers of this epistle consider the circumstance here mentioned as something extraordinary, and I admit that it was. Nevertheless, since it is not said, that any of the bones of Sanctus were broken, or that his limbs were dis-jointed, we ought not to be rash in pronouncing the appearance miraculous. The narrative of this epistle is sober and accurate, and little exposed to the cavils of infidelity. We ought not, without necessity, to adopt an interpretation of the passage concerning Sanctus, which might be attended with difficulties.

Pag. 40.

“ By causing her to blaspheme.” Biblias was one of the slaves who, through the force of torture, had borne witness against the

the Christians, and had accused them of flagitious practices. She was now brought forth, that she might in public renew her testimony, or "that she might be made to *blaspheme*." This appears to be the sense of the expression; and accordingly it is observed, that Biblias, instead of persevering in her charge, thus spake. "How can *they* devour children, to whom it is not lawful to taste even the blood of brute animals."

Pag. 41.

"To taste the blood of brute animals." Hence it appears, that the Jewish precept, of abstinence from blood, was observed by the Christians of Gaul in the second century. This abstinence from blood was probably one of the causes which led the Heathens to suppose, that the Jews and the Christians professed the same tenets. It is remarkable, that the Heathens knew little of the institutions of the Jews, excepting what



what was visible in their practice ; such as, circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, and abstinence from blood, and from the flesh of certain animals.

“ The grievous straining of their legs in the stocks.” The original adds, “ of their feet, stretched out unto the fifth hole.” This is omitted in the translation, because it is unintelligible without a commentary, and consequently would have embarrassed the reader. It appears, that there were five holes for each foot in those stocks. When the feet were placed in the fifth hole on each side, they were extended to the greatest possible distance from each other. *This* I have rendered “ grievous straining.” It is well expressed by Prudentius.

“ Lignoque plantas inserit

“ Divaricatis cruribus.”

Pag. 44.

“ Not such indeed as had often occurred

“ to

" to the brethren." It would seem, that  
 Valeſius has altogether miſunderſtood the  
 ſenſe of this paſſage. He ſays, " Notan-  
 " dum eſt quod aiunt Lugdunenſes, rarum  
 " adhuc in eccleſia ejuſmodi indulgentiæ  
 " uſum fuiſſe erga lapſos, nempe, quia ad  
 " hoc uſque tempus pauci admodum lapſi  
 " fuerant: itaque, ceſſante morbo, nihil opus  
 " erat huiuſmodi medicinâ. Subſecutiſ au-  
 " tem perſecutionibus hoc remedium cre-  
 " brius uſitatum eſt." The Chriſtians of  
 Gaul ſpeak not of receiving again into the  
 church thoſe who had fallen away. They  
 mean, that on this occaſion there was an ex-  
 ample of apoſtates again acknowledging that  
 faith which they had abjured; of this, ſay  
 they, there were few examples; and they  
 mention it as a peculiar mercy vouchſafed  
 by Chriſt. It is probable, that they had  
 Heb vi. 4. in view; a paſſage which affords  
 little hope of the recovery of ſuch perſons.

Pag. 45.

“As murderers, and defiled.” For of such offences they had confessed the Christians in general, and consequently themselves, to be guilty.

Pag. 46.

“The sweet perfume.” This alludes to 2<sup>d</sup> Cor. ii. 15. *Xpistḗ evadía ismèn.* “Perfume” is here used instead of “favour,” which has become a word of less dignity than it was in the days of the English translators of the Bible.

Pag. 49.

“Upon a cross.” Blandina was a slave; and slaves were particularly subjected to that mode of punishment. There is to be seen in Lipsius *De Cruce*, l. 3. c. 11. a delineation of this method of exposing the sufferer to be torn in pieces by wild beasts.

Pag. 50.

“None of the wild beasts having offended her.” Perhaps as having been already

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fatiated;



fatiated ; or from their being disturbed with the shouts and uproar of the multitude. There is no necessity for supposing, that any thing preternatural happened on this occasion.

“ The condemnation [or punishment] of the crooked serpent.” This alludes to Isaiah xxvii. 1. “ The Lord shall punish the serpent, that crooked serpent.”

Pag. 51.

“ When he learnt that he was a Roman.” The privileges of a Roman citizen were, to appearance, respected ; but *who* was there to assert the rights of our common humanity ?

Pag. 53.

“ Put to death.” In the original it is ἀποτυμπαίνεσθαι. This word occurs, Heb. xi. 35. “ ἄλλοι δὲ ἐτυμπαίνεσθαι.” Our translators render it “ tormented ;” which shews that they were not certain of its meaning ; and indeed the opinions of the learned are

are divided concerning it. "Distended like  
 "the skin of a drum;" "racked on a  
 "cross;" "beaten to death with cudgels;"  
 and "beheaded;" are some of the meanings  
 ascribed to it. And there are others which  
 it would require time to explain.

"*The general convention.*" This was on  
 occasion of the great annual solemnity, when  
 the sixty nations of Gaul met at the altar  
 sacred to Rome and Augustus, on the ka-  
 lends or 1st of August. The figure of this  
 celebrated altar may be seen on medals; and  
 it is particularly delineated by Menestrier,  
*Histoire de la ville de Lyons*, p. 68. The  
 sixty nations of Gaul erected an altar to  
*Rome and Augustus*. We need not inquire  
 why divine honours were bestowed on the  
 living Augustus: a court-poet says, with  
 more truth than probably he intended,

"*Præsenti tibi maturos largimur honores,*

"*Jurandasque tuum per nomen ponimus*

"*aras.*"

But it may be inquired, what notion did the Gauls entertain of the other divinity, *Rome*?

The Roman soldiers who occasionally visited our island, have left many vestiges of their veneration for the gods of Britain, with whose names they were unacquainted. Hence it might be conjectured, that the nations of Gaul intended to dedicate their altar *Genio populi Romani*. This conjecture, however, is unsatisfactory; for if by *Roma*, they meant *Genius populi Romani*, why did they not employ that phrase, which is no less classical than *Roma*, and more expressive?

The Roman soldiers who erected altars in Britain *Diis loci*, *Genio loci*, and *Genio terræ Britannicæ*, knew not the names of the tutelary divinities whom the Britons adored; but surely the Gauls could not be ignorant, that their favourite Mars was the tutelary divinity of the city of Rome; I therefore imagine, that by *Roma* they understood the  
city



city itself. In this view, the whole inscription may be considered as composing a monument of vile and abject flattery, without any excuse or palliative of superstition.

Pag. 56.

“ Condemned Attalus to be exposed to  
“ wild beasts.” *This* the governor did to gratify the spectators, who no doubt esteemed the devouring of men by wild beasts to be a far nobler shew than simple beheading; and yet herein the governor acted in manifest contempt of the laws. Strange that Attalus, who was neither a slave nor a bishop, should have been exposed to such tortures, under the mild and envied administration of the Antonines !

“ The name of [his] God.” In the original, “ of God.” But I understand the sense to be, “ of that God whom ye worship,” or “ of the God of the Christians.”

Pag. 58.

“ As a noble-spirited matron.” There  
seems

seems to be an allusion in this passage to the story of the Jewish mother and her seven sons: 2 Macc. vii.

“ Inclosed in a net.” It was one of the refinements of barbarity in those times to inclose the criminal in a net, and then to throw him to be tost by a bull.

Pag. 60.

“ That the scripture might be fulfilled, *“ He that is unjust,”* &c. This alludes to Rev. xxii. 21. 22.; and it affords satisfying evidence, that the Apocalypse was received as a book of canonical scripture in the second century.

“ The *heads* of those who had been beheaded.” This plainly relates to such of the martyrs as were Roman citizens, and in consequence of that quality had been beheaded. In the extract of this epistle which Eusebius has given, he does not specify the number of the martyrs. He himself says, l. 5. c. 4. that it was unnecessary to transcribe

scribe the catalogue of them, as contained in the epistle from the Christians of Gaul, because he had inserted the epistle at full length in another work, called *The collection of martyrs*; but unhappily that work is lost. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Francor.* l. i. c. 27. seems to say, that the martyrs of Lyons were *forty-eight* in number. In l. i. c. 49. *De gloria martyrum*, he mentions the same number of *forty-eight*; but in recounting their names, he only mentions *forty-five*. Out of this list Attalus, one of the most eminent of the sufferers, is omitted altogether. This must be imputed to the carelessness of transcribers.

“Some were filled with indignation,” &c. In this memorable passage, the behaviour of three different sorts of Heathens is described; and it may be matter of curious, and not unuseful, inquiry, to trace the principles of each sort.

They who “were filled with indignation,”

&c.



Sec. were probably the Heathens who discovered, that the Christian system was incompatible with the Pagan. We know, that a rabble of Ægyptian, Syrian, Etruscan, and Grecian deities, obtained the privileges of citizenship at Rome, and that the sixty nations of Gaul concurred in erecting an altar to a *city* and a *living man*. The politicians who devised, or who established so strange a community of gods, would not have excluded Christ from their pantheon; but it is probable, that they soon discerned the unsociable nature of the Christian religion, and on that account persecuted its professors. I speak of *the unsociable nature* of the Christian religion; because a religion founded on the unity of the Supreme Being is necessarily unsociable, and can never be incorporated with any species of Polytheism. They who understand the genius of Christianity, will not suppose *unsociable* and *intolerant* to be synonymous.

The next class of Heathens mentioned in the epistle, appears to have been composed of superstitious idolaters, intoxicated with the dregs of Paganism. As their own religion consisted altogether of pageants and ceremonies, the difference between it and the Christian religion must have been discernible even to their rude understandings. By men of such dispositions, ignorant, and filled with prejudices, the punishment of the Christians would be considered as the triumph of Polytheism.

The men of the third sort were those who neither believed in Polytheism, nor were active in inculcating the belief of it; but who, having no relish for dangerous inquiries, adored the Gods of the state, and sincerely pitied the Christians, who, by avowing unlawful opinions, exposed themselves to capital punishment.

Pag. 62.

“ In the river Rhone.” If in any case

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the spirit of discovering the relics of holy men could have been restrained, it was in this, where the church itself, without ambiguity of expression, declared, that the bodies and bones of the martyrs having been collected, were consumed to ashes, and scattered in a wide and rapid river. Nevertheless, towards the end of the sixth century, Gregory of Tours says, *De gloria martyrum*, l. i. c. 49. “ Quorum Sancta corpora  
 “ iudex iniquus igni tradi precepit, exustis-  
 “ que in Rhodanum pulveres iussit spargi.  
 “ Sed postquam hæc gesta sunt, cum Chri-  
 “ stiani mærorem maximum haberent, quasi  
 “ deperissent beatæ reliquiæ, nocte apparu-  
 “ erunt viris fidelibus in eo loco quo igni  
 “ traditi sunt, stantes integri et illæsi, et  
 “ conversi ad viros, dixerunt eis, *reliquiæ*  
 “ *nostræ ab hoc colligantur loco*, quia nullus  
 “ periit a nobis; ex hoc enim translati su-  
 “ mus ad requiem, quam nobis promissit  
 “ Rex cœlorum Christus, pro cuius nomine



" passi sumus. Hæc renunciantes viri illi  
 " religiosi Christianis, gratias egerunt Deo,  
 " et confortati sunt in fide; colligentesque  
 " sacros cineres, ædificaverunt basilicam mi-  
 " ræ magnitudinis in eorum honorem, et  
 " sepelierunt beata pignora sub sancto altari,  
 " ubi se semper virtutibus manifestis cum  
 " Deo habitare declaverunt."

It would appear, that to the brethren, of  
 whom Gregory speaks, intelligence was mi-  
 raculously communicated, that the ashes of  
 the martyrs, instead of being thrown into  
 the river, had remained on the spot where  
 the bodies were burnt. The expression,  
 " Postquam hæc gesta sunt," might be un-  
 derstood to imply something which happen-  
 ed immediately after the death of the mar-  
 tyrs. The mention, however, of *a church*  
*of wonderful magnitude*, and of the deposi-  
 ting the ashes at *the great altar*, authorise  
 us to place the æra of this tale at the distance  
 of two hundred years from the persecution

in Gaul. And indeed, while the memory of the circumstances of the persecution was recent, this fictitious revelation, contradicting the evidence of the senses of all the surviving Christians at Lyons, could not have obtained credit.

Pag. 64.

“ Did they imitate Christ.” μιμηται. The English translators of the Bible have industriously avoided the words *imitate* and *imitator*, and have rendered μιμηται by the word *followers*.

“ Who, when he was in the form of God, “ thought it no robbery to be equal with “ God.” It may seem strange, that I should follow the common translation in this passage, although the epistle from the Christians in Gaul has been appealed to for proving *that* translation erroneous. Not presuming to judge of the genuine sense of a text which has divided the opinions of the Christian world, I thought it most expedient  
to

to abide by the vulgar translation; and indeed it may well be questioned, whether the epistle from the Christians of Gaul affords any material argument on either side of the controversy. It is universally admitted, that the passage, Philip. ii. 6. treats of the original glory, and of the subsequent humiliation, of Christ; the only question is, *Where* does the one *end*, and the other *begin*, in the expression of the apostle? The writers of the epistle to the Asiatic churches intended to shew, that the martyrs, when most dignified, did voluntarily humble themselves, after the example of their master; for illustrating this observation, they quoted Philip. ii. 6. It is probable, that they quoted the whole passage, although Eusebius may have abridged it, or transcribers may have omitted the *κ. τ. λ.* or *&c.*

Pag. 65.

“Themselves to be *witnesses*.” There was a necessity for using the word *witnesses*, instead



instead of *martyrs*, at this place, that the contrast between the suffering Christians and Christ, *the Faithful Witness*, Rev. i. 5. might be preserved.

“ The leader to that life which is of “ God.” τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ. Literally, “ Of “ the life of God.” This expression is authorised by undisputable examples, and especially by Ephes. iv. 18.; yet it is paraphrased, in order to avoid an ambiguity.

Pag. 66.

“ They justified themselves unto all.” πᾶσι μὲν ἀπελογήσο. This expression has been variously understood; and perhaps the translation here given does not attain to the sense of the original. Rufinus, the ancient interpreter of Eusebius, renders it, “ Placabant omnes.” Others render it, “ They “ defended or justified all men.” Valesius seems to have understood the words in that sense; for he thus translates them. “ Omnium defensionem in se suscipiebant.” Yet

in his notes he seems to approve of the interpretation given by Musculus: "Omni-  
 "bus rationem fidei suæ reddebant." i. e.  
 "They rendered a reason of their faith un-  
 "to all." And then he adds, that the  
 passage may be translated, "Omnibus se ex-  
 "cusabant." Which words seem to agree  
 with the version here given. Dr Lardner  
 has, "They *apologized* for themselves to all."  
*Jewish and Heathen testimonies*, vol. 2. p. 210.  
 In common language, *apologize* has a differ-  
 ent meaning from that in which Dr Lardner  
 understands it.

Pag. 67.

"Their most vehement contest," &c.  
 This alludes to their labour in reclaiming  
 the apostates, mentioned at pp. 51. 52. The  
 expressions are highly figurative, and may  
 be supposed to allude to the 12th chapter of  
 the Apocalypse.

"Tender compassion." In the original,  
 μητρικὰ σπλαγχνία, "The bowels of a mo-  
 "ther."

"ther." The sense of the words is given instead of a literal interpretation.

Pag. 68.

- "It was *revealed* unto Attalus." This is obscure; for there are various passages in the New Testament, expressing, or at least intimating, what is said to have been *revealed* to Attalus; in particular, 1 Tim. iv. 4. Perhaps the application of those scriptures to the case of Alcibiades is the only thing here intended.

IN



IN these Epistles there are many references and allusions to the scriptures of the New Testament. The following are the most obvious.

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2 Cor.

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THE END.

